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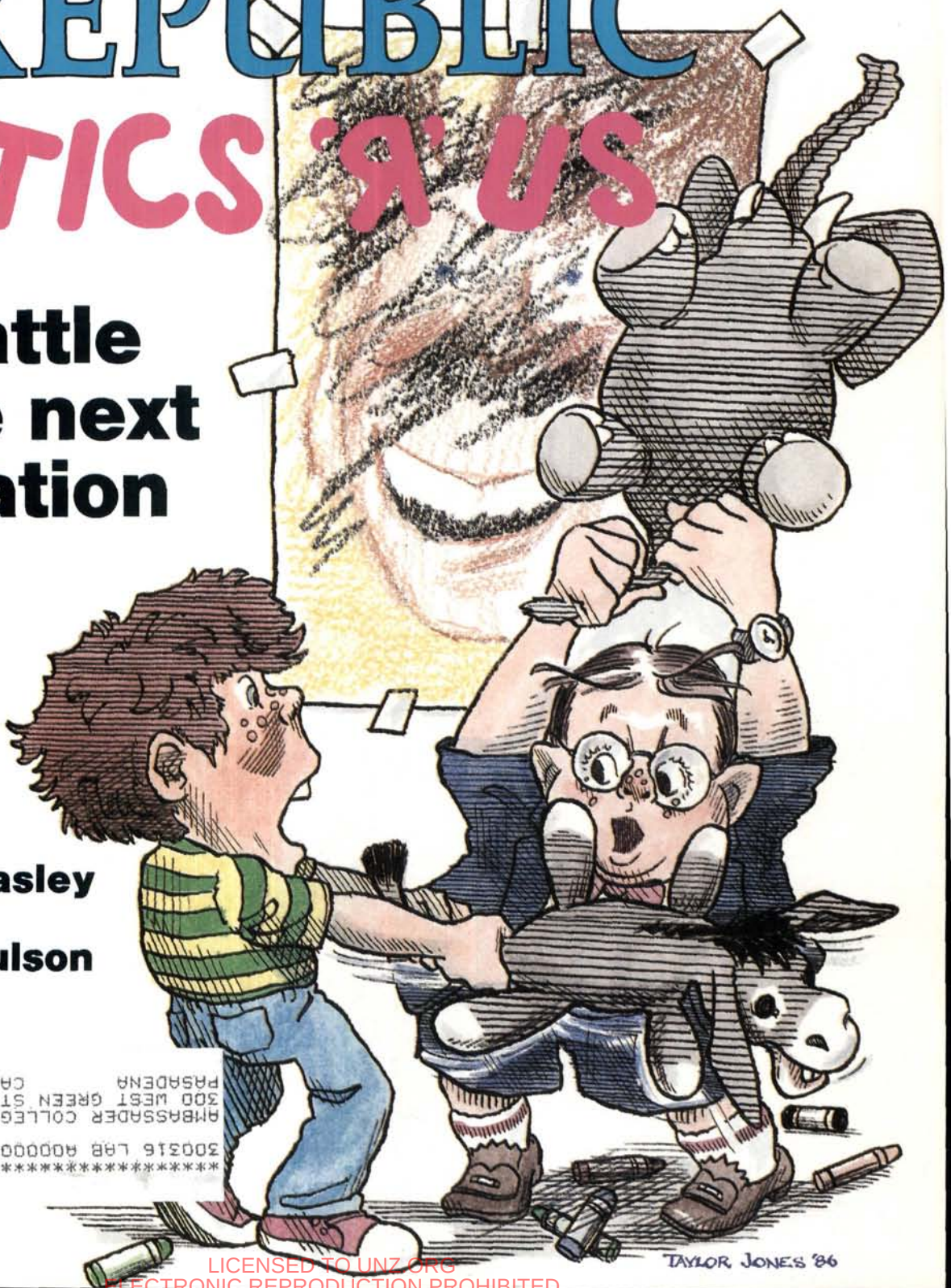
THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOV 19 1986

POLITICS '88 U.S.

The battle for the next generation

by Jeffrey L. Pasley and Crocker Coulson



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ALL THINGS RECONSIDERED

To the editors:
Although Fred Barnes exaggerates, he correctly identifies a leftward bias in NPR news reporting ("All Things Distorted," October 27). Should I tune instead to Bryant Gumbel for interviews with "Miami Vice" cast members? Watch local network coverage of yet another fire, traffic pile-up, or county dog show? No thanks. A solution for news-hungry citizens might be NPR for high-quality (albeit leftist) reporting and the *New York Times* for mainstream coverage of the same events. If we still feel politically unbalanced, there is always THE NEW REPUBLIC for the latest in neo-conservative opinion and commentary.

BRIAN RIPLEY
Columbus, Ohio

To the editors:
NPR is far from perfect. But few other places in broadcasting understand as well how to communicate to an audience with reporting and commentary that speak to our predicament as people instead of numbers in a ratings poll.

I have more than a passing interest in Barnes's rebuke, since he criticized my commentary on the U.S. bombing of Libya. Barnes says my comments were delivered "on behalf of Qaddafi's daughter who, *the Libyans claimed*, was killed in the bombing" (emphasis added). Talk about distortion! Does anyone really still doubt the baby was killed? Far from offering an apologia for the Libyans, the commentary emphasized the insanity of innocent babies being used as cannon fodder in Reagan's and Qaddafi's war.

Mr. Barnes should call up Bernard Kalb, late of the State Department and something of an authority on truth and Libya. While he's at it, he might also ask him a thing or two about broadcasting.

ROB A. OKUN
Montague Center, Massachusetts

To the editors:
Fred Barnes deserves high praise for his courage in attacking the bias of NPR. His truthful exposé will likely expose him to cries of "Traitor!" from those at NPR, and on the left in general. It takes a great deal of integrity to point out the biases and the misrepresentations of those who are often one's fellows. Insofar as THE NEW REPUBLIC is willing to do this, while at the same time maintaining a consistent (if, in my mind, objectionable) liberal philosophy, it deserves the praise of both those on the right and the left.

W. JAMES YOUNG
Northumberland, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
The statement that the volume of NPR's Central America coverage has been driven by restricted grant funding is simply not true, as both I and Doug Bennet told Fred Barnes in separate interviews. NPR's successful search for grants in support of Central America coverage was driven by its own journalistic agenda. It is hard to imagine a decent news organization that has not covered Central America heavily since the fall of Somoza.

Barnes misunderstood my remark about the difficulties in finding "clean" money to fund coverage of the Middle East. NPR does not seek major funding for reporting from the region; we do cover the region heavily, using unrestricted funds. Two contract reporters, Deborah Amos and Jim Lederman (on leave this year and replaced by Jerry Cheslow), report regularly from Amman and Jerusalem, as any regular listener to "All Things Considered," "Morning Edition," or "Weekend Edition" would know.

ROBERT C. SIEGEL
Director, News & Information Programming
National Public Radio
Washington, D.C.

DIRECTION OR DECREE?

To the editors:
Jeffrey Toobin claims that the Justice Department's efforts to have the president articulate his understanding when signing a new statute into law is an "interloper's" attempt to have "The Last Word" (November 3).

The use of presidential signing statements has been traced back at least as far as 1830. Thus, to describe the present attorney general's efforts to disseminate

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them more widely and introduce them in judicial proceedings as a "new technique" is contrary to history. Mr. Toobin also overlooks the primary purpose of presidential signing statements: to give needed direction in the administration of the law to subordinate executive officers. The president is clearly directed by the Constitution to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed." Beyond this, the president *does* have a role in the lawmaking process. The Supreme Court has stated, in *INS v. Chadha*, that "[i]t is beyond doubt that lawmaking [is] a power to be shared by both Houses and the President."

No court is bound to pay attention to the president's understanding of a statute, but many have, including the Supreme Court. Such reliance is most logical when the parties before a court dispute the past interpretation given a provision by the executive branch. Recognizing that hardly requires a court to dismiss other sources of intent. Congressional committee reports and floor statements may be equally relevant in a given case. Although it should be borne in mind that reliance upon the legislative materials Mr. Toobin exalts is a relatively modern-day practice, and one which, as Justice Scalia has noted, is often more likely to reflect the perspective of an individual member than Congress as a whole.

DOUGLAS W. KMIEC
Deputy Assistant Attorney General
Office of Legal Counsel

STEVEN G. CALABRESI
Special Assistant to the Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

HUNGARIAN REVULSION

To the editors:

Finally an article about my native Hungary, and there is not one grain of truth in it ("Hungarian Heresy" by William McCord, October 27).

You are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian revolution by printing an article from someone who obviously was dazzled by some shiny store windows, took an official tour of a factory and a farmer's cooperative, and talked to a few official representatives of the regime. One does not need a lot of specifics about Hungary to detect how seriously flawed this article is; a little familiarity with communist propaganda practices should be sufficient.

". . . 99 percent of the people are literate, and 90 percent of 16-year-olds finish eight grades of school." Didn't we learn every year in school how the Party had gotten 99 percent of the vote, how the five-year plan had been 99 percent completed, etc? But of course this was a while ago, before "bourgeois communism" was firmly established and McCord visited the country.

An article like this for the anniversary of the revolution is really like a slap in the face for those of us who believe in liberal democracy.

FRUZSINA VERESS
Needham, Massachusetts

HARVEST OF SORROW

To the editors:

Alec Nove is one of our leading authorities on the Soviet agricultural economy, and I welcome his analysis in this context of my *The Harvest of Sorrow* ("When the Head Is Off . . . ," November 3). But when it comes to the question of the Ukraine, he is on different ground. As I note in the book, even the progressives of Russia have tended to oppose Ukrainian national rights. Perhaps the reason is that without the Ukraine, as the map and the population figures show, Russian is no longer a first-class power.

As to my view of Stalin's special animus against the Ukraine being part of a "Ukrainian nationalist" myth, academician Sakharov speaks of Stalin's "Ukrainophobia" and Khrushchev used similar language in his Secret Speech. Nor is it to the point to argue, as Nove does, that there was a famine in Kazakhstan too without anyone calling Stalin anti-Kazakh: no one says that the (rather earlier) Kazakh famine, though due to brutal and incompetent policies, was actually the result of a plan to starve the population.

That the crushing of the Ukraine and the largely Ukrainian Kuban was the principal aim of the 1932-33 terror-famine cannot be refuted by noting that it also affected a few other areas. Over 80 percent of the famine victims were Ukrainian: the Ukraine was devastated; Russia was not. Nor is this a "Ukrainian nationalist" notion. Such an affiliation can hardly be urged of, for example, the Soviet Jewish writer Vasily Grossman, who wrote that the crucial decree imposing impossible grain requisitions "required that the peasants of the Ukraine, the Don and the Kuban be put to death by starvation, put to death along with their little children."

ROBERT CONQUEST
Stanford, California

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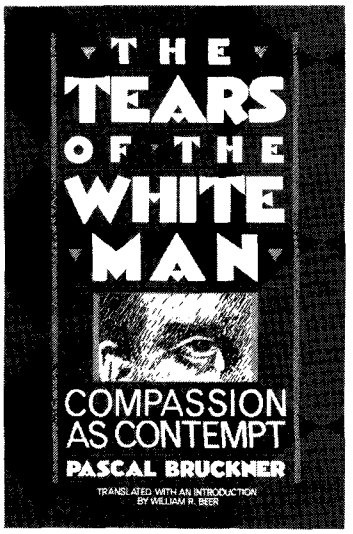

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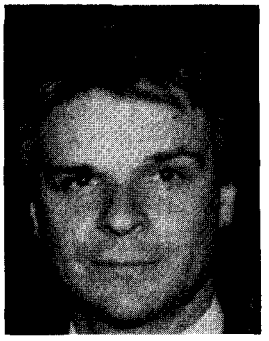

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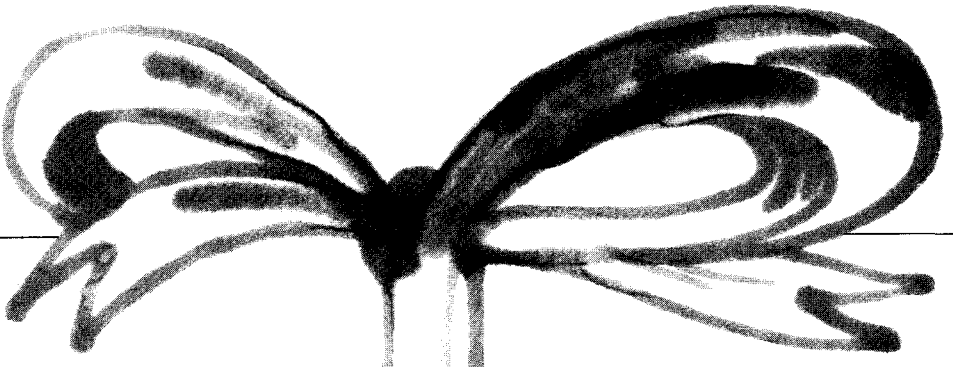

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FROM WASHINGTON

Moral Anemia

The cheapest moral high around is giving blood. It takes about 20 minutes, is just barely painful enough to seem serious, and leaves you feeling smug all day.

Over the years the United States has moved to a voluntary system of blood donation, which depends almost completely on that moral high as an inducement. For the past decade it has been official government policy to discourage commercial blood banks, which pay people to open their veins. "Cash blood," which was about a third of the total supply in the 1960s and 11 percent in 1971, is down to two percent today. Even "blood credit" and "replacement" arrangements, where each donation counts toward your own future need or past use, are disappearing in favor of a total reliance on community spirit. Eight million people give blood each year—about ten percent of the eligible pool.

This is a rare example of a work of social philosophy having an immediate practical impact. *The Gift Relationship* by Richard Titmuss was published in 1971. Titmuss, a British philosopher, compared the British system of voluntary blood donation with the American semi-commercial arrangement. He concluded that the voluntary system was not just morally superior, but more practical as well. His strongest evidence was that America's commercial blood supply caused four times as many cases of hepatitis among recipients as Britain's voluntary blood pool. He argued that offering money for blood attracts poorer, sicker donors and induces them to lie about their health. Meanwhile, the profit motive induces the commercial blood bank itself to cut corners in quality control.

Titmuss, now deceased, was a product of his time. He saw blood as a metaphor for the corruptions of capitalism. In our time, naturally, market-oriented scholars have been chipping away at his thesis. My moral high is fraudulent, they would argue. By giving blood I'm denying someone the chance to earn $50 who needs the cash more than I need the frisson. The Red Cross, they say, is just a stodgy blood cartel. The best guarantee of efficiency and quality in blood, as in any other commodity, would be a competitive free market.

Now this interesting debate is being made obsolete by the rapid spread of a third system of blood collection, without benefit of philosophy. This is so-called "autologous" blood, which means putting aside your own blood for your own use. On November 7 the American Medical Association officially endorsed autologous blood and encouraged doctors to encourage their patients to try it. "For the patient," said the AMA, "autologous blood eliminates the risk of alloimmunization or infectious disease from a transfusion." The immediate cause of concern, of course, is AIDS.

As a practical matter, it is hard to think of many things less worth worrying about than catching AIDS from a blood transfusion. Since March 1985, all blood has been tested for AIDS antibodies. The test isn't foolproof, since the antibodies don't develop until a few months after a person is infected. But in 12 million units of blood since testing began, there is only one known case of a recipient catching AIDS. Authoritative estimates of the risk of getting AIDS in a blood transfusion range from one in 250,000 to one in a million.

To put this risk in some perspective, you have a one in 40 million chance of dying in an accident for every mile you drive your car. If it's five miles each way to the hospital and you make four round-trips to store up blood in advance of an operation, your chance of being killed on the road starts to approach your chance of getting AIDS if you don't bother. Of course AIDS can be transmitted to your loved ones, so maybe the risk is worth it. But you take the same risk every day to go to a movie or the supermarket, and you do so without a second thought.

So why is the medical establishment encouraging autologous blood? In part to

continued on page 41

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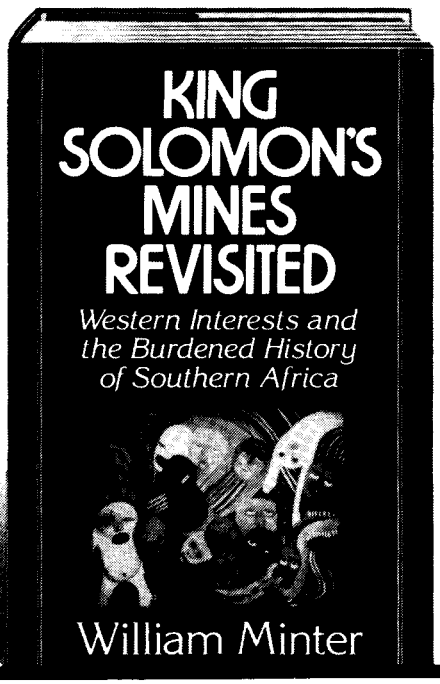

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DECEMBER 1, 1986

THE $676,000 CLEAN-UP

If you want to understand how to reform America's system of financing political campaigns, remember the figure $676,000. That's roughly how much the average challenger for the U.S. Senate had to spend on television advertising in this year's campaign. It is also the figure after which money ceased to matter—or to matter very much.

Each of the eight successful Democratic challengers for the Senate this year was outspent by the incumbent he beat. This proves that you don't have to exceed or even match the incumbent's campaign war chest. You just have to be able to buy enough TV time to get your name known and your message across. The average challenger had spent a total of $1,351,589 as of October 15, roughly half of which, or $676,000, went to TV. Apparently, then, much of what you spend beyond that is wasted, a lesson that eight former senators can impart to their colleagues in the little time they have left in Washington.

This fact also casts the debate over reforming the campaign spending laws in a rather different light. Historically, the reformers' basic impulse has always been: limit the amounts parties and candidates can raise and spend. But in 1976, the Supreme Court, citing First Amendment concerns, struck down the 1974 campaign reform law's limits on the total cost of campaigns, and on spending by a candidate out of his own pocket or by outsiders on behalf of a candidate. Meanwhile, the Court upheld limits on campaign contributions. This distinction has bestowed an advantage on rich candidates, and created the so-called "independent expenditure" as one of the key methods of evading legal limits.

Indeed, as the cost of campaigns has continued to rise (to a record House and Senate total of over $300 million this year, thanks to higher prices for TV time), PACs and parties have gone to greater lengths to get around the legal limits. According to Common Cause, for this election the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee sent a total of $4 million to certain candidates, on the pretext that the people who gave the committee the money had earmarked the funds for specific candidates. In fact, many donors had never heard of the candidate the money went to. Both parties also made extensive use of "soft money"—money from corporations, unions, and individuals for "party-building" activities not related to specific election races. This dubious distinction was eroded further as parties used the funds in ways clearly intended to benefit certain candidacies.

Reform has hardly reduced the influence of money on Capitol Hill. It has simply created a new class of fat cat: mainly business PACs concerned with establishing long-term friendly relations ("access," in Washington argot) with incumbents who hold key positions on the committees that affect their interests. That explains why this year PACs gave over $6.2 million to the "campaigns" of House members who were running *unopposed*. And why veterans such as Tom Eagleton and Barry Goldwater ended their long careers warning about the extravagant amounts of time senators devote to the crass chore of fund-raising.

PAC money hasn't "bought" or "dominated" Capitol Hill. On questions such as Social Security and welfare, arms control, and aid to the *contras*, PACs and special interests had little say. They got thrashed on tax reform. But when it comes to more mundane legislative business, PACs too often get their money's worth. Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York has received $500,000 from the partners, executives, and PACs of Wall Street brokerage houses since he took office in 1981. Just by coincidence, D'Amato used his chairmanship of a key subcommittee to protect Wall Street's right to sell junk bonds to federally regulated thrifts.

Small wonder, then, that campaign finance reform has also failed to make politics more competitive. PAC money has given members of Congress a new way to pile up huge campaign war chests and ward off would-be challengers. D'Amato illustrates this point as well. His mountainous PAC-funded campaign treasury is widely credited with keeping away potential Democratic challengers who might have given him a tougher race than the underfunded liberal who ended up opposing him, Mark Green. (In the primary, the only alternative to Green was the independently wealthy John Dyson.) Even incumbents who may suspect

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that PAC money isn't vital to their electoral safety find it hard to risk refusing. To be sure, House incumbents have always had an advantage over challengers, even in the pre-PAC era. Ninety-eight percent of the incumbents who ran for re-election this year won, not much different from the 97 percent figure in 1970. But why should we let incumbents' access to money exaggerate their advantage?

Appalled by the heavy giving to incumbents, the parties' evasions of legal limits, the record level of spending, and the lowball TV spots, reformers are pushing again for caps on spending and tougher regulation of contributions. Senator David Boren has a proposal to reduce the maximum PAC contribution to any one candidate from $5,000 to $3,000. Common Cause is calling for public financing of House and Senate races. We support some of this agenda. The parties shouldn't be allowed to send donors' money to candidates the donors have never heard of. Nor should corporations and unions be allowed to give shareholders' and dues payers' money to candidates those people don't necessarily support. But we would make a similar argument against public financing. Tax dollars—like union dues, an involuntary contribution—shouldn't go to support political candidacies and the army of media consultants and pollsters those campaigns employ.

As long as the cost of running a race keeps rising, parties and candidates will do whatever it takes to get around any limits regulators dream up. It's far from clear that we'd be

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart

1. ARMS AND THE MAN — 2 — 3

Hostages. Revelation that the latest hostage release was accomplished via an arms deal with Iran led to sputtering indignation against the Reagan administration. Questions raised: the effect of the deal on relations with allies, fighting terrorism, the Iran-Iraq war, Gulf stability, etc. There was repeated suggestion that the culture's identification with the suffering of hostage families had thwarted coolheaded policy considerations.

2. ELECTIVE AFFINITIES — 1 — 4

Elections. Has the country "dealigned" overnight? Reasons for the size of the Democrats' Senate victory eluded most professional observers, though the party was widely congratulated for avoiding any national issues. Indeed, the apparent lack of a Democratic agenda shared headlines with the victory itself. Turnout, by the way, was so low that some legislators are thinking of offering voting receipts in the future that can be redeemed for prizes.

3. TEFLON COATTAILS — — — 1

Reagan. Due to the complete failure of Reagan's last hurrah campaign tour, the confusion over the "shoot-from-the-hip" summit, and the uproar over Iran, his reputation, the competence of his White House, and the survival of the "Reagan Revolution" were all questioned. Allusions to Jimmy Carter were common, and a few commentators invoked Watergate in criticizing the end run around the CIA and Congress to keep everything secret. Even the question of the Challenger launch managed to surface.

4. CHURCH AND THE STATES — * — 3

Vatican. The conclave of American Catholic bishops in Washington, and the recent expulsion of a Jesuit for his ministrations to gays, has restored the simmering story of the division between the pope and U.S. Catholics to a full boil. The treatment of the Seattle archbishop has added a new angle: interhierarchical conflict.

5. DON'T DRINK THE WATER — — — 1

Lead. Concerned about radon levels at home? Don't swallow those aspirins with tap water! The EPA's warnings about lead contamination play into the "fouled nest" theme that continues to regain ground after its nadir in the early '80s. Environmentalism still faces a long comeback, though.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

6. THROW THE BOOK AT 'EM — * — 2

Born againism. The Battle of Secular Humanism has shifted from Tennessee to Alabama, where a court is hearing highly publicized testimony on whether humanism is a religion being imposed on the state's schoolchildren. Having defined the secular value system as an opposing faith, with John Dewey et al. as its prelates, fundamentalism's reassertive challenge to a century of American social thought continues to deepen a long-covered-over rift between mutually exclusive cultures.

7. GLORY DAYS — — — 1

Bruce Springsteen. The release of Bruce Springsteen's long-awaited live album set (his concert recordings have been hot bootleg items for years) has caused an excitement among pop music buyers rarely seen anymore. Buyers queued up before stores opened; stores talked about loading cash registers on trucks rather than wasting time to unload the albums. The set is expected to be the biggest multi-record release ever.

8. STORE WARS — — — 1

Race relations. An ugly episode involving an Asian store owner in a black D.C. neighborhood highlights tension between blacks and Orientals. These have been strained for years as recent Korean and other immigrant shopkeepers have increased their presence in black communities. Black antagonism feeds on rumors of conspiracy and mistreatment of customers.

9. NIFTY FIFTIES — — — 1

1950s. Break out the fondue. Characteristically '50s furnishings—from pole lamps to swirling glass ashtrays, long littering every thrift store in the nation—have gotten collectible. Now Thomas Hine's new celebratory analysis of the '50s look, *Populuxe*, is starting to get the recently despised style wider attention. Of course, going from fashion to garbage to collectible to revival is a familiar pattern for style.

10. EATING AND RUNNING — — — 1

Shopping. The effort of time-strained Americans to get as much done under one roof as possible is reaching new extremes. Supermarkets—which replaced visits to various specialty shops in the first place—are now also doubling as fast-food places, offering salad bars, soups, chili, nacho snacks, and other hot dishes. There was a move 20 years ago to create super-supermarkets that were also mini-department stores, but it faltered. That was before women entered the job market in huge numbers, and the effort may revive.

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worse-off under a system where one wealthy, yet principled, individual could single-handedly bankroll a candidate. More important, it's hard to square limits on contributions and spending with the First Amendment. Since we agree with the Court that people ought to be able to spend as much money as they want promoting their beliefs, we think it's time to abandon all limits, and with them the tortured distinction between expenditures and contributions. Let the fat cats give all they want—with full, detailed public disclosure of all spending and contributions to guard against abuse.

The high cost of campaigning is the real source of Big Money's power—and of whatever undesirable effects Big Money has on who runs for office, how they run, and the way they govern once they win. The point, then, is to make campaigns cheaper. And the way to do that is to eliminate the biggest-ticket item in campaign budgets: the cost of time on TV and radio. Make airtime free. This would cut the cost of running a Senate challenge by $676,000. In doing so, it would remove the principal hurdle challengers need to clear in order to establish themselves as credible contenders in the minds of the voters. The unhealthy effects of money on politics and legislating would be cut commensurately.

If broadcasters protest this infringement on their right to air what they want, they should be firmly reminded of the huge profits they reap from their use of publicly owned airwaves. Would it be fair to allow only major party candidates to use the airwaves for free? No, so grant contenders time in proportion to the number of votes their party received in the last election. Could you buy your own time? Yes. But as political consultant Greg Schneiders has suggested, you'd forfeit your right to free time if you did. And should candidates be required to use the free time for five-minute broadcasts only—as Schneiders and others who are worried by this year's gutter-level 30-second spots have suggested? We're concerned about the caliber of public discourse, too. But we're not convinced the solution is to bore voters with interminable "talking-head" style spots. Let candidates use their allotted time as they choose. Freed from endless hours of courting contributors, they may have more time to reflect on the messages they wish to communicate to their constituents.

NOTEBOOK

□ MORE DISINFORMATION: President Reagan urged the press on November 6 not to report on his dealings with Iran, ostensibly for the sake of the remaining hostages. In the same breath, he provided the best reason to ignore this request by asserting that, anyway, "the speculation . . . has no foundation." Of course the speculation had plenty of foundation. The president was, in a word, lying. The nation, and even the press, have become inured to Reagan's bland assertions that things are not the way they quite obviously are. But there is no reason to let him promote his fantasies unmolested. It would be convenient for Reagan if no one found out that he was violating his own proclaimed policy of not negotiating with terrorists, and his own arms embargo of Iran. Nevertheless, in a democracy, these are certainly vital policy changes that people have a right to debate. The administration's decision to run this operation out of the National Security Council—a novel expansion of the NSC's advisory role—in order to avoid the required congressional review of the CIA demonstrates a further contempt for democracy and law. Yes, secrecy is sometimes necessary. But in this case it was Americans, not Iranians, whom the administration was trying to keep in the dark. We might have more sympathy for Reagan's alleged desire to be low-key about these hostage dealings if he refrained from making political hay out of the ones he gets released. Instead, he brings them to the White House and parades them in front of the very press he begs not to inquire how he did it.

POSTCARD SOUTH AFRICA

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Cape Town

Patrick: Everyone knows that eventually there will be a South Africa without apartheid. What we don't know is when it will happen, how it will come about, and what form the new government will take. The timing is critical. If non-racial elections come about in the near future, either by a government decision or through outside intervention, South Africa could emerge as the most stable and wealthiest African nation.

South African politics would not likely be divided simply into black and white voting blocs. As in the United States, there would be multiple factors influencing votes and dozens of political lobbies. After the initial race problem was solved, the major division in voting patterns would be between the "haves" and the "have nots." I have spoken to several of the black South African moderates, and I do not believe the government's claim that if it gave the blacks the franchise now, white rule would immediately be replaced by a "white-hating" black communist government.

Conor: When the change happens, the new regime will have so many problems that "revenge on whites" will not likely be high on the agenda. In any case, blacks who have worked for the apartheid regime will be more at risk than any whites.

Patrick: The second more sinister, and unfortunately more probable, possibility for South Africa is that the regime will dig in its heels. Rather than ease the apartheid laws, it will tighten them, and deal with the increasing violence more and more ferociously. The only hope for a

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viable post-apartheid South Africa lies in the emergence of a sense of common interest between moderate South Africans, both black and white. The government's continued refusal to budge and the hardening of the ANC line make it increasingly difficult for this sense of common interest to prevail.

Already those liberals who can afford it—which in effect means white liberals—are leaving South Africa in considerable numbers. Many of the white liberals do so out of necessity rather than choice. The attitude among many white students is to stay until they have their degree and then leave with something to offer the outside world.

The picture painted by moderate blacks of their own situation is truly depressing. In the townships the act of being a moderate as opposed to a radical is enough for them to be looked on with "suspicion." In the townships if you are looked on with suspicion, you can easily become a target for the necklace. The effect on black moderates, naturally enough, is to shut them up. It is, in fact, the relatively brave ones who only shut up. The not-so-brave publicly toe whatever line the ANC, or some faction of the ANC, appears to lay down, and prove their radicalism by rioting. Often people frighten other people simply because they are frightened themselves.

Conor: As Patrick suggests, there is "a benign scenario" for a future non-racial South Africa. According to it, the first non-racial elections are likely to provide a parliament composed of various regional, ethnic, and class interest groups, in which no single group or party has an overall majority. This would result in intergroup bargaining, leading to coalition governments and to conditions favorable to democracy—through renewed elections—with the rule of law and freedom of expression and association, including academic freedom.

I had dinner recently with Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, the highly capable former leader of the parliamentary opposition in South Africa. I asked him what he thought of this benign scenario, which is the subject of a much discussed recent book, *South Africa Without Apartheid: Dismantling Racial Domination* by Herbert Adam and Kogila Moodley. Van Zyl said: "If there were to be non-racial elections *soon*, they might well work out like that. But they don't seem likely to be soon. It may take as long as a generation. And by that time, things would probably *not* work out like that." That was a bleak enough answer. In other words, the eventual non-racial elections would be roughly similar to those through which Rhodesia became Zimbabwe: bandwagon, winner-takes-all elections—just once!—resulting in permanent one-party authoritarian rule.

EVEN THAT would be preferable to apartheid. The new government, however authoritarian, would at least be seen as legitimate by most of its subjects: something that can never be the case with the Afrikaner brand of authoritarian rule. And the new government, by rescinding the whole corpus of apartheid law, would relieve most of the people of South Africa from a multitude of oppressive burdens. The new government, by reason of its perceived legitimacy and the consequence acceptability of its police, would also be able to end the anarchic conditions now prevailing in the townships. "The comrades" would be brought into line. The necklace would go.

All in all, the new government, however regrettable its character might be in terms of Western principle, would have a lot going for it in the eyes of most of its subjects—in the early years at least. Most South Africans, including all South Africa's blacks, have never known democracy, except as a privilege reserved for whites, and have never known the rule of law except the rule of laws devised without their consent and for their oppression. So they would not be deprived of anything they have enjoyed or learned to value. What would have happened, in the eyes of most people, would be the replacement of an unacceptable form of authoritarian rule by an acceptable form of the same.

YOU MAY well ask whether, if the future is going to be like that, it is worth making a fuss about academic freedom in the here and now, in the South African universities. This is a good question, but I think it *is* worth making a fuss. First of all, though the "authoritarian scenario" may at present seem more probable than the more "benign" pluralist one, we are not obliged to assume that it will happen. South Africa is a far more complicated society than Zimbabwe, or any of the other African countries to the north, and its future forms of government may be widely different. In the meantime, it seems important to keep South Africa's universities going. The more educated people there are—black and white, educated together—when the great transition comes, the better.

What is increasingly called "the academic boycott"—in practice student intimidation of teachers, by the threat and use of violence—is simply incompatible with the continued existence of universities of the liberal type, such as the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand. Unless student intimidation can be nipped in the bud, teachers are going to start leaving, as many of them are now talking of doing. Under those conditions, the best of South Africa's universities, and the ones most opposed to apartheid, would be going into terminal decline .

The fact that at some future date South Africa's universities *may* fall under authoritarian rule is not a reason for destroying them by making them prey to mob rule. Anarchy can be even more disruptive than authoritarianism. And the present "academic boycott" is no more than a license for the spread of anarchy.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN AND PATRICK O'BRIEN

Conor Cruise O'Brien, the author of many books, most recently of *The Siege: An Outsider Looks at Zionism* (Simon and Schuster), was vice chancellor of the University of Ghana from 1962 to 1965. Patrick O'Brien is a free-lance writer.
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WHITE HOUSE WATCH

AFTER THE FALL

THE NEWS FOR President Reagan on election night was bad, then good, then bad, but always terse. Donald T. Regan, the White House chief of staff, marched into Reagan's office at 5 p.m. Based on early samplings by Republican operatives, the chances of keeping the Senate in GOP hands were "50-50 at best," he said. An hour later, Regan telephoned Reagan in his private quarters, where he was watching returns on TV. "We're not holding our own," Regan said. But after another hour or so, he reported that the situation had improved. "Great," said the president. "Keep me posted." Regan's final report was delivered at 10 p.m., shortly before the president's bedtime. "I don't think we're going to make it," he said. "Oh, dear," responded Reagan.

These deadpan exchanges reflect the lack of surprise at the White House over losing the Senate. Mitch Daniels, the president's political adviser, was braced even for the defeat of hapless Senator Mack Mattingly of Georgia. When Mattingly was 15 points ahead in polls last summer and supposedly secure, Daniels had him correctly pegged as politically inept and a goner. In late October Regan and his aides laid on a schedule of postelection events, one a day, designed to show that the White House was not reeling from the Senate setback. "We had to fill a void and demonstrate leadership," says a senior official. The day after the election, Reagan gave a public pep talk to the White House staff. The next day, there was a Cabinet meeting. The next, he appeared before the press with David Jacobsen, the freed hostage. The next, Reagan delivered a radio address.

That got the president through election week, but it didn't help him solve his new problem—dealing with a Democratic Congress. There are two schools of thought on this at the White House: the confrontationists versus the conciliators. As you might guess, the confrontation school is identified with Patrick J. Buchanan, the pugnacious communications director. Buchanan worked in Richard Nixon's White House, which faced a hostile Congress after a disappointing midterm election in 1970 but still managed to dominate Washington. He argues that Reagan is free at last, no longer obliged to appease a Republican Senate. So the president should turn every major disagreement with Congress into a public feud, Reagan against Democrats. Since the people are still with Reagan, he's bound to win most of the fights.

The confrontationists' agenda starts with shots across the bow of Congress in the form of five or six recess appointments, which don't require Senate confirmation. One would be that of liberal bête noire Sonia Landau for another term as chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. "If the Democrats bitched, I'd make five or six more," says a White House official who is known to admire the views of Buchanan. The recess appointments would be followed by an executive order nullifying the racial hiring quotas imposed on federal contractors. "If I were the president, I'd do that over a weekend," the official adds. "That would send a signal to Capitol Hill that I'm alive and I have the same agenda." The confrontationists also would have Reagan veto with abandon. Reagan may be with them on this one. Addressing the Cabinet on November 6, he cited his "veto power" as a tool in dealing with Congress. Hearing this, Thomas Dawson, the executive assistant to Regan, whispered to Buchanan, "Did you write this?" Buchanan didn't.

What gives the conciliators the willies is the prospect of losing the support of Southern Democrats on big issues such as military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. The two leading conciliators at the White House, congressional lobbyist William Ball and Regan deputy Dennis Thomas, fear that a confrontation strategy would only alienate the Southerners, the swing bloc in the Senate. Shortly after the election, Ball consulted William Timmons, the Washington lobbyist who was Nixon's congressional liaison, on how to hold the Southerners. He found out that Nixon hadn't had much of a problem at all. His support among Southern Democrats was rock solid on most issues. Reagan's is squishy on many.

Taxes aren't a worry, since Democrats insist they won't push for a tax increase. "We've finally got them potty trained on that," says that White House official. Nor is continued funding for Star Wars, which many Democrats endorsed during the campaign. "We're in fat city if they vote the way they campaigned," says a Reagan aide. The tough issue is *contra* aid, which passed the Senate by a narrow 53 to 47 last summer. The confrontationists and the conciliators differ sharply on how to prevent abrupt termination of aid. The Buchanan crowd would have Reagan dare Democrats to cut off the *contras*, warning that they'll be responsible for what befalls Central America afterward. The conciliators would woo Southern Democrats with concessions on domestic issues in hopes of keeping their votes on *contra* aid. The risk with this, answer the confrontationists, is that Democrats, Northern and Southern, might back aid, but cut the amount and attach severe restrictions. This would hobble, though not destroy, the *contras*, and would free Democrats from being blamed for killing off the rebel force.

THE CONCILIATORS are circulating a one-page document to buttress their approach. It is entitled "Percentage Voting Record for U.S. Senators in Support of the President" in 1986 and is based on figures compiled by *Congressional Quarterly*. The document lists the 34 senators in the new Congress (including one Democrat, Howell Heflin of Alabama) who supported Reagan more than 75 percent of the time and the 16 (ten Democrats) who backed him 50 percent to 75 percent. That's 50 senators. Then there are the 13 new senators (11 Democrats), among them conservative Democrat Richard Shelby of Alabama, whose House record of support for Reagan was 44 percent, and a half-dozen moderates. In short, there's an emerging Reagan majority, and all the White House has to do is hold it together. Con-

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frontation, say the conciliators, would be counterproductive. "I don't believe that, in the end, this Congress wants to be viewed as a Congress of obstruction," says Thomas.

Except for the veto talk, the yawner agenda that Reagan outlined at his Cabinet meeting isn't likely to bait Democrats into obstructionism. It sounded more like Regan than Reagan. At the top was a process issue, budget reform, which is dear to Regan's heart. If the president has harbored strong feelings over the years about the need to separate the operating from the capital budget, he's kept them to himself. The second item was an amorphous theme, "a more productive America," and the third was a Reagan staple, keeping the military strong. This agenda is a conciliator's dream. Reagan's address to the White House staff, drafted by Thomas, also suggested he was tilting toward the conciliators. On matters of strategy, Reagan usually sides with the majority opinion of his staff. "To all those on Capitol Hill," he said, "I look forward to Congress's return. By then, the election will be behind us and hard work and bipartisan cooperation will be ahead."

Maybe bipartisan cooperation isn't ahead, though. Thomas says the White House won't "fire the first shot." But Congress might, and the confrontationists could get the non-stop fight they relish. "I don't think we're going to wind up with any choice," says a White House official. "You can do a lot of things, but when a man wants to fight you, you've got to oblige him." With Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd vowing to forge ahead on proposal after proposal that the White House opposes, Reagan may get mad.

FRED BARNES

Life, libertie, and earthly delightes.

OUR PURITAN DILEMMA

NOW THAT WE'RE all sitting in the privacy of our own homes, let's have a show of hands. How many of you out there don't want to take a urine test because you'd fail? Let's be honest. Not because it would violate your constitutional rights (though it does), not because it's demeaning (though it is), not because the tests are fallible (though they are), but because . . . well, you know why. You were at a friend's going-away party last weekend, and you were listening to some good music and the crowd was a funny, friendly bunch, and at one in the morning someone handed you a joint. You took a hit, and, come Monday morning, you don't think it's really anybody's business. Come on, you're among friends. And don't worry, nobody's taking down names. This is just for the sake of a discussion we've all wanted to have but no one's had the nerve to start. Good. I see a lot of hands. Let's talk.

People like us face a dilemma. The best way to illustrate this dilemma is with another show of hands. How many of you have a drug problem? Not many hands, I see. Of course, some of you sitting on your mitts are fooling us or fooling yourselves. But, statistically speaking, most of you are telling the truth. You and I might fail a urine test tomorrow, but we don't need drug counseling and we probably never will. We don't jump to the conclusion that drug abuse isn't a problem. A lot of people can't handle drugs, but the obvious truth is that a lot of people can.

Since we are readers of a political magazine, let's consider the political implications of our situation first. If everybody has to take a urine test, the people who won't or can't face up to their drug problems will be helped. For the liberals among us, we make this argument all the time: the many must sacrifice for the unfortunate few and so on. Why shouldn't that apply here? As for all you conservatives, you have your own mental crises, which is probably why you're using drugs. We don't have time to get into your problems here.

BUT WHY shouldn't the good-of-the-many rule apply everywhere? For example, my favorite recreational drug is Michelob Light. Why do I do this drug? Tastes great? Less filling? Well, yes, but there's another reason. It gets me drunk. In the privacy of my own home and in the company of my wife, I like that. Now, who here thinks there is a moral distinction between an alcoholic high and a marijuana high? I see a woman raising her hand. You think there is a distinction, ma'am? No, but you want to ask a question.

Let me repeat her question so that everybody can hear it. This young woman (she's my wife, actually) says, "No, there's no difference, but can society really sanction everything? Alcohol is, by tradition, the one release we sanction. Isn't that enough?" Very good question.

I see John Winthrop waving his hand. Please stand up, Mr. Winthrop. I don't know if you all know him. John was the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 17th century, and I'm sure he has something illuminating to say about our current quandary concerning worldly pleasures and social responsibility.

[Mr. Winthrop speaks.] "When I had some tyme abstained from suche worldly delightes as my heart most desired, I grewe very melancholik and uncomfortable, for I had been more careful to refrain from an outward conversation in the world, than to keepe the love of the world out of my heart, or to uphold my conversation in heaven; which caused that my comfort in God failinge, and I not daringe to meddle with any earthly delightes, I grewe into a great dullnesse and discontent; which beinge at last perceived, I examined my heart, and findinge it needfull to recreate my minde with some outward recreation, I yielded unto it, and by a moderate exercise herein was much refreshed."

All for "moderate exercise" that leaves us "much refreshed" say Aye. [A dull roar, apparently signaling approval.] Order! Order! I see a small claque of conservatives

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over there on the right objecting strenuously. I see in their ranks alcoholics, pot smokers, teetotalers, and coke fiends—about as many as you'd find in any other crowd. Let's hear from a White House punk on dope, the young man in the blue three-piece suit. Please speak up. He said, "Our hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue." Thank you, sir. I wonder, though: Why does Ms. Virtue accept such tribute—unless Mr. Vice has something quite important to offer?

Let's go back to John Winthrop for his thoughts. "I afterwards tooke occasion, from the benefite of Christian libertie, to pretend need of recreation when there was none, and so by degree I ensnared my heart so farre in worldly delights, as I cooled the graces of the spirit by them."

Exactly. The heart ensnared in worldly delights is the heart of our problem. In an ideal world, everybody would take the opportunity to taste worldly delights, yet recognize the cooling of the "graces of the spirit." Each person would know when sensual pleasure had lost its regenerative powers and was making his or her world a colder, not a better, place; when doing Michelob Light (or whatever) goes from being a human pleasure to being a selfish mistake; in short, when Mr. Vice knows it's time to pay up. The paradox lies in Mr. Winthrop's "Christian libertie." The "libertie" would allow each of us to make mistakes, to find this acceptable balance—for ourselves and on our own. The "Christian" modifies this liberty with a moral code to be honored, if not followed. Which is more important: "libertie" or its qualifier?

As a patriotic American, I choose liberty, and I'll flunk a urine test to prove it. Now I want to turn the floor over to a capitalist friend of mine. [The audience stirs.] He has something to offer you [commotion in the aisles]: pills that will render your urine as pure as the vice president's. [Total pandemonium.] He claims his invention is to the 1980s what radar detectors were to the 1970s . . . [speaker drowned out by rising applause].

Meeting adjourned!

JEFFERSON MORLEY

Trading arms for prisoners.

HOSTAGE CRISIS II

PRESIDENT REAGAN IS facing his greatest credibility crisis yet. Before the 1980 election, he cast aspersions on Jimmy Carter for negotiating with terrorists and bargaining for hostages. For six years, he and his minions have declared they would never do the same, and they have browbeaten allies for allegedly lacking the courage to follow Reagan's example. The administration proclaimed neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war, promoted an arms embargo to both sides (called "Operation Stanch"), and sent emissaries around the world urging other nations to join. Now it appears that all this has been a sham. For the last 18 months, the administration seems to have been securing arms for Iran—reportedly $60 million worth, most shipped through Israel—in hopes of winning the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon. The administration says this isn't so, but it had better prove it.

The motive was humane: to save lives. Yet President Reagan has derived political advantage by pretending to have a special ability to withstand public pressure and coolly serve the national interest in the face of terrorists and hostage-holders. It appears that this has been just an act. If that's so, it undercuts his reputation both for strength and for telling the truth as best he knows it. His enemies think he has always dealt in rosy fictions, if not outright falsehoods. The Democrats, now in control of both houses of Congress and sensing the chance to unmask their nemesis at last, are planning any number of hearings and investigations. The press, sensing that Reagan's damned Teflon is finally scratched, is boring in.

Democrats and the press were after Lt. Col. Oliver North of the National Security Council as the agent used for skirting congressional restrictions (since repealed, but perhaps not for long) on aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. Now they can go after him for helping funnel arms to Iran. The NSC is also vulnerable, legitimately, for the botched effort at "disinformation" directed at Libya's Colonel Qaddafi.

There is a serious and potentially dangerous tendency at work here. It looks as though the NSC staff has caught a whiff of the "executive action" disease that afflicted several White Houses in the pre-Watergate era. Whenever it was politically risky or just inconvenient to trust Congress, the State Department, or even the CIA, they resorted to covert derring-do, John Buchan stuff, to get their work done. Sometimes such activity is merited. Persisted in, it inevitably leads to big trouble.

THERE IS A pattern of incompetence to Reagan's recent foreign policy behavior. After the Iceland summit, the administration could not get its story straight. The "disinformation" flap made the administration look foolish. And, merited or not, there is a suspicion that the Reagan White House has played some politics with foreign policy. The offer to sell subsidized grain to the Soviets certainly was an effort to save some Midwest Senate seats. Will Democrats probe to see whether former national security adviser Robert McFarlane was sent to Tehran in September to produce a pre-election "October surprise"? Will they ever.

However much Reagan will be made to suffer by Democrats in Congress, worse damage will be done to his credibility with the European allies, moderate Arabs in the Persian Gulf, and the American people. Margaret Thatcher, who backed Reagan on the Libya bombing, was embarrassed by the Iran disclosures just as she tried to convince fellow Europeans to invoke sanctions against Syria; she

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succeeded in spite of us. The United States is not more abject than France, which coddles terrorists almost indiscriminately, but we certainly look hypocritical. Getting the Europeans to join us in concerted action against terrorism is going to be much harder.

The Gulf Arabs have been terrified that Iranian fundamentalism will topple their feudal regimes. They can't seriously believe that the United States *favors* an Iranian victory, but trading arms for hostages suggests again that the United States is not as strong as it pretends to be, and this adds to their fright. We also appear to be incapable of taking action independent of Israel, which does tilt toward Iran in order to undercut Iraq.

Finally, if it develops that Reagan has been trading for hostages after saying for so long that he wouldn't, his word will never be fully relied upon by the American people again. He has built up a reservoir of affection and trust. But his ability to lead will have been hurt. Top White House officials claim to understand the danger, but they have not yet found an effective way to deal with it. White House chief of staff Donald Regan just says that history will show that the administration has done the right thing, and meanwhile everyone should please shut up because hostages' lives are still involved. The administration can do better than that. It can at least brief trustworthy congressional leaders. If the administration had a case, they could say so without endangering an ongoing operation.

At the moment, administration officials are offering up mitigation, not proof of innocence. Officials say, first, that whatever weapons the United States might have allowed to get to Iran (and whatever Israel supplied) could not possibly tip the balance in the stalemated Gulf war. Iraq has a 5-to-1 advantage in tanks and artillery and an 8-to-1 advantage in aircraft. Iran has more manpower (its population is three times Iraq's), but Iraq has 60 percent of its male population mobilized, so the armies are of almost equal size. The long-feared Iranian "final offensive" has never come off because, administration experts think, Iran is far short of the 3-to-1 overall advantage an attacker needs to win. Iran's only chance at victory lies in a collapse of Iraqi morale, which the United States presumably has little to do with.

SECOND, the administration says, the United States made contacts with Iran primarily for strategic reasons, not to get hostages out. It's important for Iran to remain an independent buffer between the Soviet Union and the Gulf, and there are elements inside Iran's ruling hierarchy—"not moderates, but relative pragmatists"—who want to reduce their country's economic and political isolation. This group is widely believed to be led by Akbar Rafsanjani, speaker of Iran's Parliament, who's at odds with the Ayatollah Khomeini's chosen successor, Hussein Ali Montazeri. A relative of Montazeri, Mehdi Hashemi, was recently arrested for treason, which the administration took as a good sign for the post-Khomeini future. Hashemi was the man in charge of spreading the Shiite revolution to other countries.

Opponents of the NSC gun-running policy say the United States had to know that its activities would come to light eventually and would embarrass the very faction the United States was trying to woo. The leak came first in a pro-Syrian newspaper in Lebanon (presumably because the Syrians were angry that they weren't getting credit for securing the release of hostages) after a tip from Montazeri militants. White House officials acknowledge that the publicity probably has embarrassed Rafsanjani, but they are pleased to note that he is still saying he would welcome better relations with the United States if it would just change policy.

A THIRD LINE of defense is that Iranian-inspired terrorism against Western targets has declined recently. Even opponents of administration policy acknowledge that recently seized American hostages in Lebanon do not seem to have been grabbed by groups identified with Iran. However, these officials claim that there has been no letup in terrorism directed against Middle East targets.

Finally, sources involved with the White House policy simply declare, as one of them put it, that "this was not an arms-for-hostages deal. I know it's difficult to believe it because you see arms going into the machine and see hostages coming out, but there's more to it than that. I guarantee you that neither Bud McFarlane nor I would be party to such a thing." Such officials hint that some "secret deal" was involved leading to a change in Iranian policy on terrorism. To demonstrate goodwill, the Iranians got their friends to release U.S. hostages and the United States got its friends to provide some spare parts. "Believe me," said one source, "the intent behind all this was good and serious, but we can't talk about it because people's lives are at stake."

Maybe so, but other U.S. officials say flatly that the White House is lying. They say that contacts with the Iranians may have started for strategic reasons, but quickly devolved into a guns-for-hostages trade. One suspects that some of these officials are miffed that the Reagan administration has been unwilling to deal with Syria on an equal basis with Iran, but others seem truly offended that the administration has abandoned its proclaimed anti-terrorist policy and has gotten practically nothing in return. "It's a dream world to think you're going to provide some military equipment and change Iranian policy. You've got two factions in Iran playing against each other and we're just the pawn."

So, whom to believe? On one side, national security adviser John Poindexter and chief of staff Regan, saying "trust us." On the other, Secretary of State Shultz, nothing if not a moralist, letting it be known he opposed the White House policy. Congress needs to step in and find out the truth—quietly, at first, if that's necessary. After all, there really are innocent people's lives at stake here.

MORTON KONDRACKE

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TROUBLE IN TEHRAN

Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and his former prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, have been conducting a rancorous and, to the uninitiated, obscure public debate. They have been arguing about a treaty signed by the Prophet with Arab tribes in seventh-century Arabia; the challenge Moses posed to Pharaoh; and the death and martyrdom of Imam Husain, the third of 12 leaders especially revered by Iran's Shiites, in 680.

But this debate has aroused considerable interest in Iran. For the two men are in fact arguing about current issues: whether Iran should seek military victory or a negotiated settlement in its six-year-old war with Iraq; whether it should export its Islamic revolution and champion the cause of the world's disinherited classes against the powerful and the exploiters; and whether it should seek good relations with the "world-devouring" great powers. Bazargan has called into question Khomeini's autocratic style of leadership and his militant vision of Islam. He has posed both a religious and a political challenge to the regime. Like Khomeini, he argues in the language of Islam, for political and religious issues have been inextricably intertwined in the Islamic republic.

Bazargan resigned his post as prime minister in November 1979, after the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. He has been the most outspoken critic inside the country of Khomeini's policy of pursuing the war against Iraq until President Saddam Hussein is overthrown. Bazargan has urged negotiations. In August Khomeini sharply criticized Bazargan's views. Bazargan replied in an open letter addressed to Khomeini issued under the name of his political organization, the Iran Freedom Movement. The letter has been circulating semi-clandestinely.

For Khomeini the war with Iraq is a war of Islam against unbelief. He has ruled out negotiations because "Islam does not allow peace between a Moslem and an infidel." Those who urge compromise with "infidels, oppressors, tyrants, and idol-worshipers" are either weak-hearted or traitors. An end to hostilities would only involve Iran in an arms race that Saddam would win, given Iraq's access to both Western European and Soviet bloc arms and the denial of arms to Iran. Khomeini's goal of an Islamic government established at Baghdad is now downplayed, but the aspiration continues to motivate Iran's radical elements, in the Revolutionary Guard, among the clerics, and elsewhere. "War, war until victory"—the slogan thundered out at political rallies and mass Friday prayer meetings—encapsulates the government's official position.

Bazargan has described this as a formula for "war, war until self-annihilation." He points to the futility of the war now that Iraqi troops have been expelled from Iranian territory, and stresses the terrible cost in lives and physical destruction. He denies that Islam justifies waging aggressive war against another Moslem state, and depicts the conflict as "a war between two oppressed Moslem nations." Bazargan says that "neither Islam nor the Traditions of the Prophets" gives Iran the right to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. He rejects the idea that revolutionary Iran is charged with a sacred, worldwide mission to struggle against oppression and unbelief.

Bazargan's letter also brings into the open a debate about military strategy. The army has been reluctant to commit large numbers of poorly trained young men in massive offensives against far better equipped Iraqi troops. These have brought territorial gains only in return for substantial human losses. The strategy is fueled by the conviction that faith will prevail over arms. Khomeini depicts the Old Testament prophets, particularly Abraham and Moses, as militant, lone warriors against idolatry and unbelief. When Imam Husain went to battle against his enemies in 680, he "did not contemplate compromise with the oppressor despite the meagerness of his numbers and his arms." In the same way, the Iranian people, in the dark days of the war with Iraq, "expelled the enemy from our beloved country by relying only on God and faith and . . . martyrdom."

Bazargan, on the other hand, evokes a picture of the Old Testament prophets, of Jesus, Mohammed, and the Shiite Imams, as men who avoided war, entered it only with adequate preparation, and preferred persuasion and kindness to secure their ends. The Prophet, he notes, signed peace agreements with his former enemies in Mecca; Imam Husain, with his small force, died at Karbala in Iraq in his unsuccessful bid for the caliphate—not because he intended to fight with inferior numbers or to become a martyr, but simply because his plans went awry.

When Bazargan castigates Khomeini for inflexibility and for refusing the counsel of others, he again does so in Islamic terms. The issues of peace and war, he writes, are too complex for "an individual, however well-informed and discerning, who is neither infallible nor the recipient of revelation, to decide alone, without reference to the views of others." Even the Prophet, he notes, consulted with his companions, and the Prophet had the benefit of both infallibility and God's revelation. Is your authority, he asks Khomeini, "a thing higher than Prophethood?"

This challenge to Khomeini comes at a time when the economy is particularly hard hit by the war. Moreover, misgivings about the war have developed inside Khomeini's own camp. Reports this summer attributed the removal of the commander of the ground forces, Colonel Sayyad Shirazi, to doubts he expressed about the wisdom of a policy of "war until victory." Bazargan's letter confirmed rumors that members of the Cabinet and the clerics of the influential Association of the Seminary Teachers of Qum separately urged Khomeini to explore non-military options for ending the war. According to Bazargan, Khomeini told Cabinet members they could step down if they felt they were not up to the task of continuing the war. And he is supposed to have told the seminary teachers: "Do not speak of peace and the end of the war as long as I am alive. After that, do whatever you want."

SHAUL BAKHASH

Shaul Bakhash is Robinson Professor of History at George Mason University.

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The latest in getting sick.

DISEASE OF THE WEEK

PEOPLE LOVE a scare story, especially if it concerns their health. Back in the 1970s, hypoglycemia set a standard for the making of a good media disease. No one had ever heard of low blood sugar, yet all of a sudden everyone seemed to have it. As any health reporter knows, there's popular appeal in an "equal opportunity" illness with lots of everyday symptoms, such as fatigue or headaches. Soon our attention was turned to the less humdrum: anorexia nervosa and bulimia generated a lingering fascination that allowed sufficient time for us to become voyeurs, for doctors to become experts, and for eating disorder clinics to open all over the country. Then came a series of infectious-disease scares—chlamydia, yeast infection, toxic shock syndrome. And who could forget herpes? Sometimes an old illness such as premenstrual syndrome can be recycled as a new one when someone tries to sell a cure. In this case, a major hormone company fed the press stories of women as victims of raging hormones, and it was only a matter of time before there were coast-to-coast PMS clinics dispensing progesterone without benefit of supporting scientific evidence.

Osteoporosis is the current media disease, as we are constantly reminded by those ubiquitous ads for calcium supplements. Few diseases come with their own visuals: the profile of the young erect woman slowly merges into the stoop-shouldered middle-aged woman, ending with the old woman whose spine curves into a hump. Since the loss of bone density that characterizes osteoporosis is associated with aging, anyone who lives long enough could get this disease. Its primary candidates, however, are white and Oriental women. Each year, hip fracture will occur in 150,000 elderly Americans, and 15 percent to 25 percent of them will die of complications within a year. The annual tab for medical and nursing services related to hip fracture is $7 billion. The second major concern is vertebral fractures, which can cause acute back pain, loss of height, and limited movement.

Osteoporosis got its start as a media disease at a 1984 consensus conference sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. From that conference came the recommendation of major calcium increases in the American diet and a big push from the calcium supplement manufacturers and the dairy industry to promote their wares. Reporters eagerly disseminated the calcium message, knowing the public's receptiveness to the idea of a disease that can be prevented with dietary changes. Far less attention was given to the objections raised by osteoporosis researchers who view the NIH recommendations to adults as premature: the few studies showing any benefit to calcium supplementation were short-term ones. But the calcium ads have already had their effect, and by now millions of women take supplements as insurance against a disease that is synonymous with aging.

As soon as osteoporosis was pronounced a preventable disease, early detection became the rallying cry, and screening centers began opening across the country. There are now more than 500 of them; about one-fourth to one-third are owned by doctors and are not affiliated with hospitals. They offer the standard advice regarding calcium and exercise, but the moneymaker is testing. Normally, people do not undergo testing without their physicians' advice. However, the media attention, not to mention the prospect of a dowager's hump, has motivated many women to bypass their doctors and seek the early detection possibilities offered by these clinics. Many advertise directly to women, suggesting that everyone between 45 and 70 be screened.

Two tests that measure bone density are commonly offered at osteoporosis screening clinics. One, called single-photon absorptiometry (SPA), determines the density of the bones in the forearm; the other, called dual-photon absorptiometry (DPA), measures the vertebrae. Most of the doctor-owned screening centers offer SPA as means of assessing the risk of fracture, despite the fact that bone loss in the forearm has little to do with osteoporosis of the hip and spine, the most common sites for fracture. Used alone, as it is in many centers, SPA has no value, yet

HOW TO SPOT THE NEXT MEDIA DISEASE

You may wonder what the next media disease will be. There is no telling at this point, but here are some suggestions to help you keep up:

Do not rely on medical journals. Even the best of them tend to be slow in recognizing when a media disease has run its course. As recently as last March, for example, the *New England Journal of Medicine* ran an article on herpes.

Keep an eye out for a disease that predominantly, but not necessarily exclusively, affects women. They live longer, oversee the health care of others, read women's magazines, and are generally more receptive to the idea of going to doctors.

Look for a disease with an element of mystery. If it is well understood or can be cured quickly, why on earth would we want to read about it? Watch for Chronic Epstein-Barr Virus Syndrome. Any disease with the word *syndrome* in its name can be regarded as a possibility.

Determine whether the disease has clinic potential. There is an oversupply of doctors in this country. Clinics not only provide employment, they also allow a disease to live on well after the media is through with it.

M. N.

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treatment recommendations are made based on the results. In a review of the medical literature, published last June in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Steven R. Cummings, M.D., and Dennis Black, M.A., of the University of California, San Francisco, concluded that DPA *might* be able to assess the risk of vertebral fracture, but said it should be given only to high-risk women whose treatment would be affected by the results. (When begun right after menopause—the time of accelerated bone loss—estrogen therapy is the only proven method of prevention, but it has risks that include stroke and uterine cancer. There are treatments for women over 65, but none has proven effectiveness.) Cummings and Black emphasized that no test can accurately predict who will suffer a hip fracture in old age, and that indiscriminate screening is not justified.

But for screening to become more discriminate, we need a more precise definition of who exactly is at high risk for osteoporosis. About 20 factors, ranging from inactivity and coffee drinking to family history and long-term steroid use, place a woman at risk. With the exception of early menopause, there is no agreement among experts as to which are more serious than others. Most women have several risk factors. To complicate things further, researchers are uncertain about what degree of bone loss will predict a fracture.

WIDESPREAD MEDIA coverage of osteoporosis has helped to foster entrepreneurial medicine. Hospitals seeking new customers are now opening women's health clinics with osteoporosis screening as a major draw. Gynecologists, radiologists, and nuclear medicine physicians—acting alone or in partnerships—have invested in screening equipment, especially SPA. Those with licenses, issued by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to perform other radionuclide tests, are free to perform osteoporosis tests. Others can receive a license after eight hours of training in the safe use of the radioactive materials. Testing physicians' competence in analyzing the test results is not the purview of the NRC—or any other agency, for that matter. Training is sponsored by the equipment manufacturers.

The cost of an SPA test ranges anywhere from $40 to $248 and a DPA test ranges from $100 to $350. Most insurers will not reimburse costs for any screening tests, but they will pay when the same tests are used to make a diagnosis. With a disease like osteoporosis, testing can easily be portrayed to the insurers as having a diagnostic purpose because bone loss and several risk factors can be found in most middle-aged and older women. In most cases, testing costs are reimbursed by Medicare and other insurers, according to spokesmen for two of the largest screening equipment companies and a spot check of clinics in New York City. (A spokeswoman for the Health Care Financing Administration said that DPA is regarded as experimental; therefore its cost is not reimbursed, even when indicated as a diagnostic procedure. However, a sampling of DPA providers interviewed for this article all said that Medicare pays.)

What began as a media effort to educate the public about a preventable disease has generated an enthusiasm for mass screening that is clearly premature. And it will be a long time before the public receives a more balanced view of whether the tests have any value. Health editors prefer positive reports on the virtues of calcium and eschew complex medical controversies, especially those concerning the inadequacies of a popular test. Naturally they want to recommend something that allows people to take control of the situation. Screening tests have traditionally served this purpose. Ideally, osteoporosis research physicians would have established guidelines for SPA and DPA *before* the average gynecologist and radiologist began offering them. As it is, we'll be well into the next media disease before it is clear just how osteoporosis testing should be handled.

MARYANN NAPOLI

Maryann Napoli writes *HealthFacts*, the monthly newsletter published by the Center for Medical Consumers in New York City.

The hidden issue of the '86 campaign.

NOTCH BABIES

DURING THIS PAST political season I was the issues director on a congressional campaign. It was an opportunity to roll up my sleeves and grapple with the key issues of 1986. I knew from reading the *Washington Post* and watching "This Week with David Brinkley" what those issues were: Reagan's failure to make an arms control deal at Reykjavik; the disparity between the booming "bicoastal economy" and America's depressed agricultural heartland; the prospect of full-scale military intervention in Nicaragua. I looked forward to participating in this national debate.

Unfortunately, almost none of the voters who called to inquire about my candidate's positions wanted to talk about these things. Instead, I received a steady stream of angry calls demanding to know what we were going to do for the notch babies. The notch babies are people born between 1917 and 1921 who have convinced themselves—beyond all reason—that they are getting screwed by the Social Security system. It's no exaggeration to say that during the campaign I received more calls about the notch issue than on any other subject. Five or six in a single day was not unusual. They reminded me of the Ellen Jamesians in *The World According to Garp*—spiteful, single-minded, and, to the uninitiated, deeply baffling—

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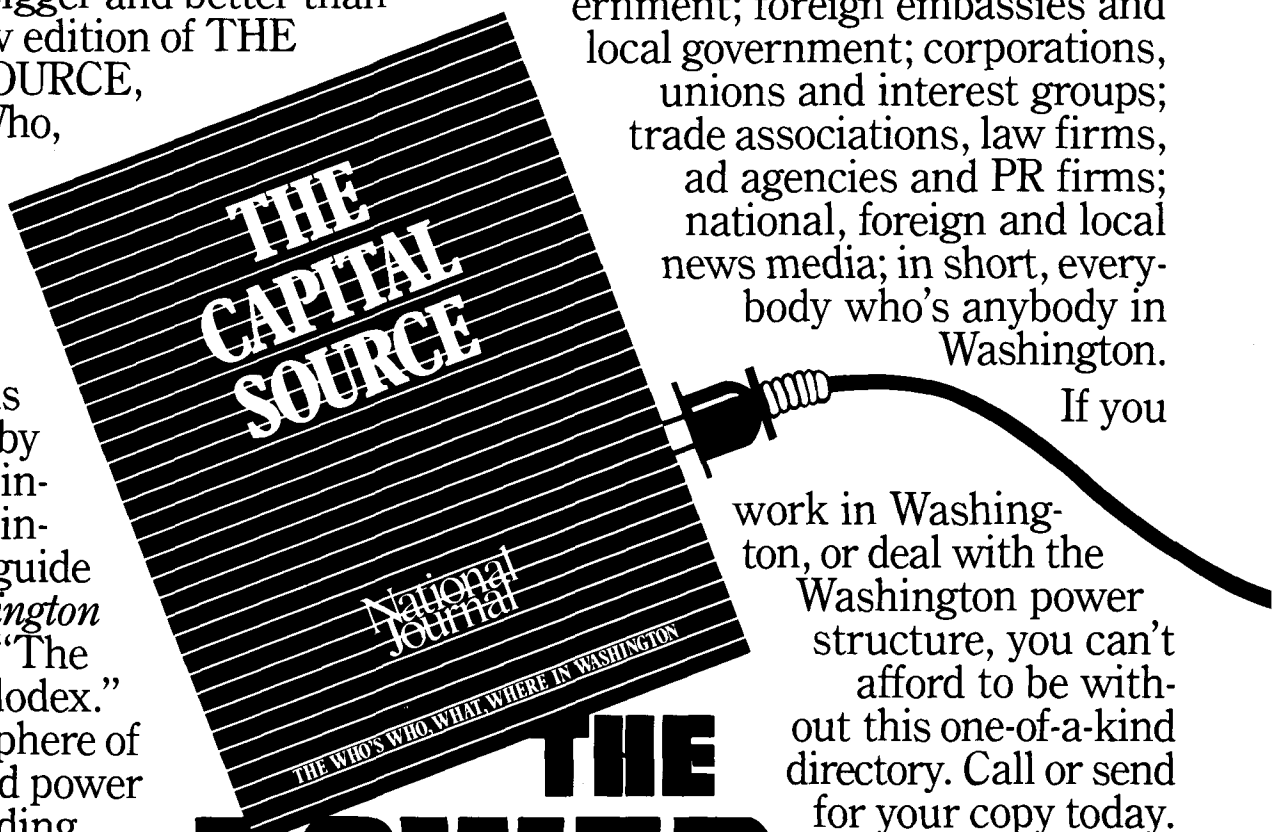

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What the Leaders Read.

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a parody of a special interest group.

The origin of the notch crisis is a 1972 law that indexed Social Security benefits to inflation. Social Security recipients were given annual cost-of-living increases (COLAs) that would be based on the Consumer Price Index. No problem there. But the table that was used to calculate a recipient's initial benefit—the dollar amount a recipient received in his first year—also reflected inflation.

This was a mathematical error. In effect, Congress granted Social Security recipients double compensation for inflation. As a result, Social Security benefits started to rise more sharply than Congress had ever intended. The goal of indexing was to guarantee an average initial benefit roughly equal to 42 percent of a retiree's previous wages. But the average Social Security recipient was soon receiving an initial benefit of 45 percent. By 1981 it was up to 54 percent. Projecting into the next century, many retirees would be receiving an initial benefit of more than 100 percent—more money than they had ever received in their working lives. The cost would be hundreds of billions of dollars.

EVERYONE AGREED that this had to change. The average initial benefit had to be fixed at 42 percent of wages; annual COLAs would then ensure that the recipient's benefits kept up with inflation. So in 1977 Congress fixed the formulas. But it made two concessions. First, it left alone everyone born before 1917 who had already retired. Wresting benefits—even benefits awarded accidentally—from any group is generally viewed to be politically impossible. This is even more true for a group as politically well-organized as the elderly.

The second concession was to phase in the new formula over a period of five years. This phasing-in period affected those born between 1917 and 1921—the notch babies. During this period, recipients would have their benefits set either by the new formula or by a special transition formula—whichever gave them a higher dollar figure. The average notch baby would continue to receive a benefit that was higher than Congress had ever intended back in 1972 when it tied Social Security to inflation. But instead of receiving $123 a month more than intended, as the average recipient collecting his first Social Security check in 1981 did, the average newly retired notch baby had to settle for an $85 monthly windfall in 1982, a $78 windfall in 1983, $44 in 1984, and $48 in 1985. Retirees after 1985 would only get the benefits due them under the corrected formula.

Notch babies are indeed worse-off than retirees who preceded them. That is inevitable, unless the mistake is to be perpetuated indefinitely. But they are better-off than those who follow, because they get the benefit of the phasing-in formula. (And they are far better-off than the retirees of the next century, for whom further benefit reductions are already enacted into law.) What gives some of them the inaccurate impression that they are victims of a "notch" in benefits is the fact that, because of inflation, the dollar value of later retirees' initial benefits may be higher. But the real value is lower. And in any particular year from now on, notch babies will get a higher indexed benefit than equivalent later retirees, because they start from a higher real-value base.

On September 5, 1983, Abigail Van Buren discovered the notch babies. "Dear Abby," wrote an anonymous "Notch-Year Baby":

> If you want to do a good deed, please print the following message: If you are drawing Social Security and were born in 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, or 1921 . . . you are being unjustly penalized by receiving lower benefits than those born prior to and after the above-mentioned years. For example, if you worked until you were 65 before starting to draw Social Security, you are receiving about $100 less in your monthly check than those born before 1917 or after 1921.

"Dear Baby," Abby answered:

> Thank you for your important message. I checked your facts and they are accurate. Readers who do not know in which district they reside, or who their representative is, should look in their telephone directory under "U.S. Government." Listed there will be "Congress." Any congressional office will be able to tell you who your congressman is and how to write to him.
>
> Your congressman is your elected representative. Let him know that you want this inequity corrected.

Dear Abby told me that this column got "at least half a million responses." Even accounting for some exaggeration, the impact was enormous. Representatives received a flood of inquiries from irate notch babies demanding that justice be done. By September 13, Representative J. J. Pickle was telling his colleagues on the floor of the House, "One thing we have learned in the past week is that something written in 'Dear Abby' is faster than a telegram and more powerful than the evening news. When 'Dear Abby' says write to your congressmen, people do not just listen, they act."

Dear Abby ran a partial retraction of her original column on September 26, conceding that notch babies were not worse-off than those who would come after them. But by then the genie was out of the bottle. A Midwest Notch Group was formed in Iowa. A Social Security Notch Year Committee was formed in Delray Beach, Florida. State and local governments across the country started passing resolutions urging Congress to correct the notch problem. And notch babies began to descend on Washington for semi-annual demonstrations.

THE NOTCH BABIES have taken on some of the more unattractive characteristics of their children of the (old) New Left. I observed a decidedly up-against-the-wall-motherfucker tone in their voices when they called me. Many warned me that our position on the notch problem would determine their vote. (Our opponent was a co-sponsor of one of the more irresponsible notch bills in the House.) I tried to deflect these calls by saying that my candidate was not in favor of cutting anybody's Social Security benefits. This was a trick answer, of course, since the notch babies have not had their benefits cut. Unfortunately, about half of the callers picked up on this, and ordered me to put up or shut up.

Notch babies also resemble the New Left in the preening

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generational consciousness they are starting to develop. "Let me tell you about us notch babies," one retiree told me. "We got undernourished as babies because of World War I rationing. We grew up during the Great Depression. Then we fought in World War II. And now the government wants to take away our benefits."

Will the notch babies get what they want? They certainly know how to make their demands heard. And several representatives have introduced notch bills to pacify them. The favorite among notch babies, weighing in with 174 cosponsors, is H.R. 1917 (get it?), sponsored by Edward R. Roybal, chairman of the Select Committee on Aging and someone who should know better. Roybal is indefatigable on the notch issue. He has held hearings and meets regularly with notch groups. His bill would phase in the 1977 change not over the present five years (which are just coming to an end), but 30, providing retroactive benefits to the notch babies, at a cost of nearly $80 billion over the next five years alone.

The American Association of Retired Persons and the National Council of Senior Citizens won't touch this proposal because it's so irresponsible. Neither will Representative Claude Pepper, America's leading advocate for the elderly. "The notch is not the problem," Pepper wrote to Roybal. But tell that to thousands of screaming notch babies.

My candidate lost.

TIMOTHY NOAH

Timothy Noah is a contributing editor of the *Washington Monthly*.

The politics of youth.

LOST GENERATION

BY CROCKER COULSON

ON HALLOWEEN the streets of Greenwich Village were a carnival of animated corpses, sequined starlets, and androgynous delegates of imagined planets. Inside the Puck Building, revelers were downing four-dollar drinks and dancing to a New Orleans bar mitzvah band on floors littered with ersatz $1,000 bills. The festivities were sponsored by the Democratic National Committee, part of a belated effort to stanch the flow of America's youngest voters to the Grand Old Party. There were no speeches, no leaflets, no declarations of faith. Outside I asked Mao Zedong (Yale '80, Goldman Sachs) about the future of the party. He thought the Democrats should move to the center, but admitted, "I find politics pretty boring."

For six years, while bright young Democrats have drifted off to work in law firms and investment houses, the Republican Party has captured their generation. In 1984 Ronald Reagan won 59 percent of the college-age voters. Worse, young people (ages 18 to 27) are the one demographic cohort where more people identify themselves as Republicans than as Democrats. This group gives Reagan an approval rating nine points above the national average. In an August poll it was the only age group to prefer that the GOP retain control of both the Senate and the White House.

The most remarkable thing about this shift is that college-age voters diverge from the Republican Party on almost every issue. Despite the millions of dollars that the right has pumped into conservative journals and speakers' bureaus, the ideological atmosphere on campus remains almost unchanged from the early 1970s. According to a survey of 300,000 college freshmen, a majority of Reagan Youth backs national health insurance, legal abortion, taxing the rich, and cutting defense spending. The big change has come on broad themes: "being very well off financially" has soared as an important goal, whereas "keeping up with current events" and "developing a meaningful philosophy of life" has plummeted. In other words, when college students think about most issues, they tend to side with the Democrats, but they don't think about them enough to matter.

Through organizational and marketing savvy, the Republicans have translated this vapid materialism into an electoral majority. In a era obsessed with winners, they have painted the Democrats as permanent losers. "Young voters remember only two presidents," says Dennis Kilcoyne, executive director of the College Republicans. (Kilcoyne, whose parents were long-time Democrats, began his political career at 13 licking envelopes for Reagan in the 1976 North Carolina Republican primary.) "They remember Carter and Reagan, and it's pretty clear which one they prefer." And just in case young voters can't remember back that far, the Republican National Committee put together a TV spot in which a hale telephone lineman reminds his young co-worker about "1979, with its gas lines and inflation."

Republicans have discovered the formula that sells on

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campus: concentrate on economics and national self-esteem and avoid social issues that might force kids to curtail their vices. As Kilcoyne notes: "I never heard of a College Republican club that made abortion their issue of the term." Since 1980 the College Republicans have become the nation's largest youth-oriented political movement, tripling membership to 100,000 students. Its strategy, borrowed from the left, is to use a core of hardened ideologues to direct uncommitted sympathizers. At dozens of campuses this fall, the CRs canvassed the student body to determine who was inclined to vote Republican, and made sure they registered. "When students are registered somewhere else, we'll get them an absentee ballot and come to their dorm rooms and notarize it. They don't have to do anything," explains Kilcoyne.

College Republicans also serves as a training ground for the next generation of right-wing activists. Along with groups like Morton Blackwell's Leadership Institute, Young Americans for Freedom, and Heritage's Third Generation, the CRs are part of the conveyor belt that locates conservative youth, schools them in the doctrine, and moves them into public life. Kilcoyne notes with pride that College Republicans are "the most conservative faction in the Republican Party," and speaks with scorn of the "country club Republicans" who were unseated by the Reagan revolution. In 1970 the CRs broke with the Young Republicans for being too soft, and there has been a running battle between the two groups ever since. The Young Republicans are closely bound to the party; the College Republicans owe their allegiance to Reagan and the right.

In 1984, when the Young Republicans held a cocktail party for a delegation from China, a few blocks away the CRs feted students from Taiwan. Following the MX missile vote, they passed out "Neville Chamberlain umbrellas" to Republicans who diverged from the Reagan line. When the left built shanties as a symbol of apartheid at the University of North Carolina, the local Republican club surrounded them with a scale model of the Berlin Wall. "That convinced the college administration to rip the whole mess down," says Kilcoyne, who recommended the tactic to CR chapters across the country.

But the CRs' greatest influence may be in shifting the internal balance of power in the party itself. In a straw vote at a student summit this summer, 58 percent of the College Republicans backed Representative Jack Kemp for president in 1988 (George Bush drew a lame 22 percent). "Kemp is considered to be the natural heir to Ronald Reagan," says Colleen Morrow, who was executive director of the CRs in 1984. "He talks about growth and opportunity, about a tough foreign policy. Young people love him." Kemp's beaming visage is printed on all CR literature, and he is the most requested speaker at campus chapters. Their enthusiasm is reciprocated. "Here we have a ready-made national network for any potential campaign," notes Kemp aide John Buckley. "A candidate like Bush just can't tap into that energy."

The College Republicans' accomplishments are particularly striking when viewed against those of their Democratic counterparts. In contrast with the fiery-eyed zealots of the right, the College Young Democrats of America has become a haven for careerists and party hacks, more concerned with procedural maneuvering than with helping to recast the Democratic agenda. The CRs have a $250,000 budget. The College Democrats have less than $2,000. The CRs have a seat on the National Committee. The Democrats don't. The CRs have a full-time Washington staff. The Democrats don't even have an office. Asked what the party is doing to win back the youth vote, spokesman Terry Michael replied that the Democrats "aren't interested in interest group politics any more. We're dealing with transcending issues." The prevailing wisdom is that once the blinding figure of Ronald Reagan is gone, the youth will return to the fold.

THE DEMOCRATS have made a few efforts to appeal to young voters. Last fall Representative Dick Durbin sponsored the Forum for the Future, which sent 50 House Democrats to campuses around the country. The objective was to expose young representatives to the mood on campus, but the reception was decidedly cool. CRs sent out voting histories on each speaker and packed the meetings with hecklers. And at Georgetown University, Democratic representatives were castigated by their own for being mired in the problems and attitudes of the Kennedy era. Kilcoyne recalls the effort with a sneer: "What a waste of money. They could have funded a whole national organization with what they spent on those forums!"

Last spring the DNC funded a trial program in Massachusetts and North Carolina. The results in Massachusetts, a solidly Democratic state, were promising. In six months the state committee founded 20 new chapters, published a glossy magazine that was sent around the country, and established a jobs bank to move Democratic activists onto campaigns and state offices. Jim Spencer, who ran the Massachusetts effort, Campus Action '86, found that college progressives had splintered into dozens of groups. "Students on the left got involved with women's groups or the divestment movement. The last thing they thought of was the Democratic Party," he says. To counter this trend, the Democratic clubs began bringing in speakers and sharing manpower to focus on particular issues. But in May 1986 the $5,000 grant ran out, and Spencer left to work on the Joe Kennedy campaign. For the moment Campus Action has been shelved.

As the recent elections showed, the Democrats can still eke out a majority from young voters when they field attractive candidates. But recapturing the generation that came of age with Reagan will require more than an occasional bacchanal. Cultivating first-time voters isn't interest-group politics; it's a form of self-preservation. Think of the party as a factory: if you neglect investment and spend all your money on labor and materials, you will increase your profits over the short term. But eventually the gears wear down, the cables snap, the fire box explodes, and the entire plant shudders to a halt.

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Federalist Pipers

In 1980 a conservative lawyer named Michael Horowitz wrote a scathing attack on the conservative legal establishment. By toadying to big business, he said, right-wing legal groups failed to appeal intellectually to students in the best law schools. The absence of a conservative vanguard would undermine efforts to translate President Reagan's instincts into policy. A year later, three Yale graduates, then studying law at Yale and the University of Chicago, founded the Federalist Society. Horowitz didn't know then, but his prayers had been answered.

The Federalist Society has evolved from a group of libertarian law students chatting over dinner into the right's primary instrument for capturing the legal establishment. From a dozen students it has swollen to encompass 50 law schools and chapters in five cities. Its membership includes half of the political appointees in the Justice Department, the general counsels of several federal agencies, and aides to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Its speakers have included nearly every conservative legal thinker of consequence and every Reagan official involved in the law. "In 20 years," Horowitz says, "I think you'll find . . . a whole generation of judges, law professors, and policy-makers who came out of the Federalist Society."

The Federalist Society paints itself as a philosophical movement, advocating a creed that has been suppressed by the "orthodox liberal ideology which advocates a centralized and uniform society." Its founder, Steven Calabresi, a special assistant to Attorney General Meese, recalls arriving at Yale Law School after working on the Reagan campaign in 1980 to find that "all the issues I was excited about weren't even on the table." Calabresi (a nephew of liberal legal scholar Guido Calabresi, who is dean of Yale Law School) says the leftish professoriat "had simply stopped admitting that there were other points of view." For Blair Dorminey, a speechwriter for Meese, "This hush-puppy liberalism was crushing. Conservatives at Yale were hissed down when they tried to speak in class."

This notion that conservative lawyers are a persecuted minority has become a bit comical as the Federalists have moved into the government. With a budget of $500,000 and a full-time director, the society has gone from a guerrilla force to a standing army. The Washington chapter holds monthly luncheons attended by the administration's legal elite, and symposiums that showcase conservative professors and judges. The chapter is headed by Assistant Attorney General Steve Markman, who oversees judicial appointments for the Justice Department. A dozen of the society's advisers and speakers have been placed on the bench.

But the real role of the society is to recruit the next generation of conservative cadres. It provides a reliable credential for an administration that believes the "legal establishment" to be skewed to the left and distrusts the inherent pragmatism of long-time practitioners. Horowitz says, "The conventional wisdom is that when the Democrats are in power the lawyers run the country, and when the Republicans are in the economists run things. Finally we are seeing a generation of lawyers with a strong ideological rudder who can develop an alternate set of legal principles."

Perhaps such principles compensate for what the Federalists lack in experience. Chuck Cooper, the 34-year-old assistant attorney general who wrote the directive endorsing job discrimination against AIDS victims, spent only two years practicing in Atlanta before going to Justice. Brent Hatch, whose father, Senator Orrin Hatch, sits on the Federalist Society's development board, was made general counsel for NEH at 28, after clerking for D.C. Circuit Judge Robert Bork and a stint in Justice. Meese is surrounded by Federalist speechwriters and special assistants fresh from law school or clerkships. The administration that vowed to replace the New Class of career policy-makers with people from the real world simply bought a new class of its own.

The difference between the old order and the new, the Federalists argue, is that legal conservatism is grounded in ideas rather than pathos. According to Calabresi, Federalists are split evenly among traditional conservatives like Rehnquist, Bork, and Scalia; libertarians like Chicago professor Richard Epstein; and followers of the Law and Economics school. But these factions disagree on every major issue, including abortion, First Amendment rights, and judicial restraint. Even the concept of "original intent," implied in the reference to the Federalist Papers in the group's moniker, would be disavowed by the Law and Economics adepts, who prefer cost-benefit analysis to Meesean psycho-hermeneutics.

Take the case involving a Jewish basketball player's right to wear a yarmulke on the court. To decide whether the First Amendment applied, Richard Posner, a Law and Economics theorist appointed by Reagan to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, calculated the probability of the cap falling off and tripping another player. "To any libertarian this method would be thought completely unsound," admits Calabresi. It is barely a caricature to say libertarians view free speech as a sacred right; Law and Economics theorists see it as a salable commodity; and traditionalists as a threat to democracy. The mix is interesting, but hardly coherent.

And though the society has become a pipeline for right-wing law students, its effect on campus may be overstated. "I think that there are a lot of people who go through Harvard Law and never know these guys exist," says Adam Cohen, president of the *Harvard Law Review.* Rather than a font of legal philosophy, the society is recognized as a quick route to government jobs. "I have friends who consider themselves liberal but have gone to their events or worked on the *Journal of Law and Public Policy* [a Federalist publication] because they know they are tight with the Reagan administration."

Will the society's success outlive Reagan? "These kids are very idealistic," says Horowitz, who attended law school in the 1960s. "The idealism of my generation was against the background of apathy; theirs is against the background of anarchy. This is a quieter kind of idealism." It is idealism for the '80s, the kind that wins you influence, affluence, and a great job in the government.

CROCKER COULSON

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The birth of a party functionary.

PAPER PUSHERS

BY JEFFREY L. PASLEY

YOU ARE 19 years old, you own a lot of Oxford shirts, and you believe everything your parents told you. After a peaceful adolescence in the suburbs of Kansas City, you have arrived at a well-regarded private university. You expected Western Civ courses taught by Cicero-quoting old men in tweed jackets. Instead, your Philosophy 10 professor turns out to be a bisexual Hispanic-Jewish woman who tells you that Cicero was a sexist-imperialist pig. Your vegetarian-Buddhist roommate sleeps on the floor in the nude. Out on the quad, the Democratic Socialist Latin American Solidarity Group is setting up tents to protest apartheid. Your campus mailbox is full of circulars from the Peace Studies Department. The campus newspaper prints columns written by these people. You have a bad feeling about this.

You decide that you must be a Conservative. You have read about "alternative conservative newspapers" in *Time*, and think, "Yeah, we need one of those babies here." So you send a proposal for the *Campus Spectator* to the Institute for Educational Affairs, the Washington foundation that funds conservative campus papers. Then you start clipping *National Reviews* and *American Spectators*, bone up on Edmund Burke and Milton Friedman, and wait for your check.

Soon you are a reviled campus figure. You make your philosophy prof the "Jerk of the Week" and, for fun, advocate the abolition of the student government. You get your picture in the local paper, and invitations to speeches by Jack Kemp and William F. Buckley. Suddenly all kinds of conservative groups want you to attend "leadership conferences," fund-raising seminars, and SDI teach-ins. You head off to Washington for the weekend, where you are cloistered in a conference center with students from places like the University of the South and Christian Broadcasting Network University. They are your kind of people. Conservative gurus initiate you into the mysteries of fund-raising and Section 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit Status. You return to school ready to lead your peers. During the summers, your mentors find you internships at congressional offices and political campaigns. You conclude that the liberal Reagan administration has betrayed the Movement. When you graduate, you take your sinecure at a conservative foundation, whereupon you vanish forever into the Movement bureaucracy.

Not every career goes like this, but it reflects the life stories of many members of the most celebrated student movement of the 1980s: the conservative campus newspaper. It began with the *Dartmouth Review*. Launched in 1980 by undergraduates with heavyweight financial backing and a flair for publicity, the *Dartmouth Review* became a staple of Reagan-era magazine articles on the "campus mood." It also became widely imitated, thanks in large part to the Institute for Educational Affairs, part of the well-funded network of conservative non-profit organizations. IEA currently supports 33 or 34 operating papers, with a total print run of around 250,000 copies. Half a dozen new IEA papers have started in the past year, but, as others fold, the total number stays constant. Though IEA refers to its grants as "seed money," all but a handful of the papers still depend on a share of the $140,000 a year that the foundation hands out.

IEA has now moved to its self-described "second phase." IEA president Leslie Lenkowsky says that the foundation will be emphasizing improved journalism, and making more of the papers self-sustaining. Last month it inaugurated a national advertising consortium called the "Collegiate Network" to sell the papers as a group to national advertisers.

IEA isn't very selective when it comes to handing out grants. Lenkowsky boasts that virtually no one who has applied has ever been turned down for ideological reasons. IEA does not require grantees to show either liberal bias in the established media on their campus or that the would-be editors are conservatives. Once the grant is made, the foundation exercises little or no editorial control over the paper. IEA funds the *Yale Political Monthly* and the *Carleton Observer*, neither of which could be labeled conservative. In the current *Observer*, for instance, editor Karen Kunkel savages the conservative youth culture that IEA promotes in a column entitled "Buckley, Bourbon, Blazers and Bigotry." At University of Wisconsin-Madison, IEA allocated funds to the *Wisconsin Review*, even though the campus already had a very successful conservative paper, the *Badger Herald*. The *Herald* has surpassed the official campus paper in circulation, and just became the first conservative campus daily in the nation.

ALTHOUGH IEA DOESN'T tell its editors what to print, it does bring them into contact with the network of conservative think tanks, publications, schools, and youth organizations that has developed in the Reagan era. The IEA connection gives the editors a chance to study at the feet of famous conservatives. In October the foundation flew 25 of its charges out to Washington for its annual "Student Editors Conference," an all-expenses-paid weekend of ideological back-patting with conservative dignitaries. The student editors got a reception at the National Press Club, a "press conference" with Jeane Kirkpatrick, and a day of seminars with, among others, Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds and *American Spectator* editor R. Emmett Tyrell.

The annual IEA conference is only one of many such gatherings. There are also training programs for conservative journalists, run by groups such as the Leadership Institute, a non-profit educational foundation headed by former Reagan White House aide Morton Blackwell. Student

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editors can spend a weekend in Washington (sometimes paid for by LI) at LI's "Student Publications School," where Blackwell and *Dartmouth Review* alums give inspirational talks and advice on nearly every aspect of conservative campus publishing, especially fund-raising and publicity.

The Student Publications School is a version of those "how-to-make-millions-buying-real-estate-with-no-money-down" seminars advertised on late-night television. Student editors learn Blackwell's Famous Foolproof Fund-raising Formula, a sales pitch for use on rich potential donors. They learn the proper lengths of cover letters, articles, and even paragraphs. At LI, they have the conservative paper business down to a science. In Blackwell's words, they "take students who are fundamentally well-directed, and make them technically proficient. They come out of the experience vastly more effective than most students who have their philosophy in order." The student editors are given a crash course in New Right tactics, and their first contact with the conservative polemic-production empire. This makes them potentially more useful to activist organizations that many of them will go on to staff.

DEVELOPERS OF the program originally hoped the newly trained students from the alternative papers would go on to careers in journalism or business or other areas where they might influence the non-converted. "It was an unforeseen development that so many of these kids have ended up in the conservative bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.," says Jonathan Cohen, a former IEA program officer now in New York mayor Ed Koch's office. IEA and Leadership Institute both run placement services that find their editors internships and jobs at the Heritage Foundation, the Institute for Contemporary Studies, and similar organizations. Asked to name conservative paper alumni who have become journalists rather than conservative functionaries, movement leaders mention a relatively small group, predominantly made up of *Dartmouth Review* grads who have gravitated to in-house conservative organs—*Policy Review*, the *Public Interest*, and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. "A lot of these kids aren't that interested in journalism anyway," Lenkowsky says.

So why are they in the conservative newspaper business? In many cases they are simply frustrated and in need of an identity—the same reason college kids of an earlier era joined left-wing newspapers. They are attracted by the notoriety and power that come with tweaking established authority and making outrageous statements in print. Their mentors try to counteract these tendencies. Blackwell tells his students to sugarcoat the ideological pill, to "focus on what students want to read," meaning news and humor rather than thoughts of undergraduates on, say, "Marxism in Africa" (the cover of a recent *Harvard Salient*).

Both IEA and the Leadership Institute preach the need to make the alternative journals actual newspapers, emphasizing campus news and sports and entertainment. If editors want to write about national issues or promote conservative causes, they are told to find some local angle. IEA's handbook for student editors recommends that editors "forswear partisan politics," keep opinions on the editorial page, and avoid gratuitous offense of the general readers. Only the *Badger Herald*, which has never received IEA funds, practices this policy; it may be good advice on running a newspaper, but it is not what college students looking to be infamous want to hear.

Given these contradictory impulses, many of the latter-day conservative papers are fairly bizarre journalistic enterprises. They rely heavily on "in-depth interviews," or 4,000-word verbatim transcripts of interviews, with conservative leading lights. The *Dartmouth Review* gave its center spread over to an interview with Charlton Heston that covered such topics as the actor's opinion on affirmative action. Nearly all of the papers tirelessly promote various pre-packaged "freedom fighters" sent on the circuit by Washington-based conservative organizations. Another staple is the "With the *Contras*" dispatch, sent by an editor on a foundation-paid jaunt in Central America. Again flouting IEA's advice, many papers run intentionally offensive features like the *Wisconsin Review*'s "Jerk of the Week" award.

The student papers tend to come in three general categories. The belligerent tract-fests such as the University of Chicago's *Midway Review* try to win the hearts and minds of American youth with stories on "The Rabid Left on Campus" and "Gays: An Opposing Opinion." Then there are the stuffy mock-*American Spectator*s, including *The Guardian* of Georgetown University, which tried to attract general readers with a cover story on "Crew: A Georgetown Tradition." It can be even worse when editors do take their mentors' advice, and produce vapid "campus-oriented" papers that read like some unholy amalgam of the *National Review* and *USA Today*. The best example of this is the *Dartmouth Review*, which now specializes in articles such as "Sorority Rush: Is It Overregulated?" and still milks the same controversies its founders started six years ago. The problem for all these papers is that they are no longer a novelty. They are struggling, not always with much success, to give students more reliable reasons to read them.

IT IS AT this point, when the idea of alternative papers no longer attracts much attention, that the Democrats have finally jumped into the fray. The Center for National Policy, a mainstream liberal think tank, plans to raise $50,000 toward the establishment of liberal alternative papers. The first such publication is the *Harvard Perspective*, a mild-mannered journal that, according to the editor, Peter Robertson, aims to "make it OK to say 'I'm a liberal.' " This is not the long-awaited liberal counterinsurgency. Peter Scher, director of the CNP program, says that the group wants to "encourage discussion and debate of important national issues at many levels." It doesn't sound like the stuff of which movements are made. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

For God's Sake

The Mission is the *Heaven's Gate* of 1986: a large-scale, spectacular, ambitious work on a serious theme that fails to clarify that theme, realize its characters, and develop organically. After the first ten minutes or so, I thought: "All right, now we know what you want to do. Please start over again and get it right." What I can't understand—doubtless it's naive—

The Mission
(Warner Brothers)

is why so many experienced filmmakers couldn't have seen the same thing, why they couldn't spot the flaws in the screenplay before shooting started. Failure is obviously a risk in all filmmaking, as in all art, and has struck some of the best; but to fail with such apparent insistence on failing makes me think that all the people in charge have lemming blood in them.

The story takes place in the 1750s in the area where present-day Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet. The Jesuit order had established missions in that area, and the film's conflict, historically based, is between the Jesuits on the one hand and the governments of Spain and Portugal on the other. When I first heard of *The Mission*, I thought at once of *The Strong Are Lonely*, a play on the same subject by the Austrian dramatist Fritz Hochwälder, which I saw on Broadway in 1953. (It's included in a collection of Hochwälder's plays published by Ungar.) Subsequently I read, in a *New York Times* article by Judith Miller, that an Italian producer, Fernando Ghia, had been sparked by the subject of the play—its subject only—and had commissioned an original screenplay from Robert Bolt, author of *Lawrence of Arabia* and other big screenplays. What a pity, as it turns out, that Bolt didn't adapt *The Strong Are Lonely*, which pits the (we might say) socialized Jesuit state in central South America against the imperial and commercial interests of Europe. The Jesuits lose, but by their loss they preserve governmental protection of their order in Europe. Hochwälder's work is a thesis play with poster characters and contrived climaxes, but it does make crystal clear and elementally effective what it is about. Bolt slimmed down the political-social aspects of the subject, puffed up the religious aspect into movie pietism, provided a set of characters who are not even good posters, and capped his elaborate action with a simplified battle climax that is childish as the coda of a work on a serious theme. The dialogue, usually excellent in a Bolt script, is insipid. I can quote lines from *Lawrence*; I don't want to quote any from *The Mission*. (*Is* it Bolt's dialogue? Or subsequent tamperings?) Further, a message is tacked on the very end, telling us that the cruelties against South American Indians still continue. They certainly do, but that is not the film's subject. *The Mission* is the story of a religious order trying to do God's work in man's world, of the tragedy of Christianity compromised. The abuse of Indians is the locus, not the subject.

With this screenplay in hand, Ghia spent nine years looking for backers. Congratulations to those who declined. Then David Puttnam, who produced *Chariots of Fire*, succumbed. After that mistake came another. The producers engaged Roland Joffé to direct. Joffé showed in his first film, *The Killing Fields*, that he has a good eye but a weak sense of construction, even of mere clarity. These qualities are underscored in *The Mission*. Many of the shots, as individual items, are striking. (The cinematographer was Chris Menges.) The Iguassú waterfalls are like visual Beethoven. Some long shots of a few soldiers being hauled up an immense cliff face are ingenious. But good shots don't make a film any more than good sentences make a novel. Joffé—with his editor Jim Clark—never quite understands which shot ought to follow which in order to "place" us sequentially. He shoots and edits as if he knows there is a film in there somewhere but he can't quite locate it, so he sticks in some more footage instead of refining what he has.

The story is framed by an ex post facto letter to the pope dictated by a papal emissary who was sent to adjudicate the difficulties. In flashback, then, we see Father Gabriel, a Jesuit, setting out for Indian country to start a mission, climbing steep rocks to get there. (Later, inexplicably, the emissary is just paddled up river to the mission. No rocks.) In the jungle, Gabriel plays a pipe, like Orpheus, and Indians gather round. Their idyll is interrupted by the attack of a slave trader, Mendoza, who snares some Indians and makes off with them while Gabriel watches helplessly.

Gabriel remains steadfastly good throughout. We never see how he converts hundreds of Indians so quickly and builds a mission with only their help (plus a very few priests), but I suppose these things just come your way if you're good, along with mastery of Indian language. Mendoza is meant to be more complex. He is given hurry-up, revue-sketch complications early on—he kills his brother over a woman. After six solitary months of remorse, he joins Gabriel as a penitent, then becomes a priest.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Color of Money. A sequel to *The Hustler*. The script is a pale dilution of what it might have been; Paul Newman has outgrown this role; but Martin Scorsese directs with force and heat. (Reviewed 11/17/86)

Ménage. If only this unconventional frolic hadn't become logical toward the end. While it floats, Gerard Depardieu and others keep it spinning. (11/3/86)

Otello. Placido Domingo and Justino Diaz do more than console us for the abridgment of Verdi's masterpiece. (10/6/86)

Sid and Nancy. Surprises—good acting, writing, and direction—change what might have been a fans' memorial into grim chronicle. Lives and deaths of the punk rocker Sid Vicious and his girl. (10/27/86)

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In the climactic assault on the mission by Spanish troops, Mendoza renounces the priesthood to join the battle, while Gabriel refuses to fight. Both are killed—which fact is the one resonant comment in the film.

Jeremy Irons plays Gabriel as authentically as the cardboard of the character permits. We're told that Irons went on a Jesuit retreat before filming "to understand more fully the Jesuit view of life and faith." With a role written and directed like this one, Irons might as well have spent the time at a Club Med.

Robert De Niro plays Mendoza—just about perceptibly. The role is no better written than Gabriel, but Irons at least tries. The volcanically talented De Niro has never given such a perfunctory performance, full of long "meaningful" stares that are meant to supply content to a vacuous character. De Niro has accepted some parts he ought to have left alone, but not since *1900* has he given such depressing proof of that fact.

All the other characters are off the shelf. There are a Portuguese diplomat (a good actor, Ronald Pickup) who is cynical about his cynicism; the emissary (another good actor, Ray McAnally) who goes through trite tussles between truth and expediency; a Spanish planter and slave trader who makes Simon Legree look subtle (Chuck Low, a plump actor whose expresso-bar accent and manner render his scenes ridiculous). There are also many Indians, young and old, male and female, all of unstained innocence. I wondered, then, why the females, bare-breasted before and after, wear white dresses during the emissary's visit to the mission.

Twenty-two million dollars. Nine years of scrounging for arrangements. More than four months of location shooting in Colombian and other South American wilds under grueling conditions. This is not exactly the first time that great sums and great trouble have been expended on a film that turned out dreadful; but neither is it the first time I've wondered why no one, before or during shooting, had a glimmer of what is now glaring. Well, perhaps at some point the people in charge of *The Mission* had more than a glimmer but thought, along with Macbeth, "I am in blood/ Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more, /Returning were as tedious as go o'er." So they waded on. To bring us this. □

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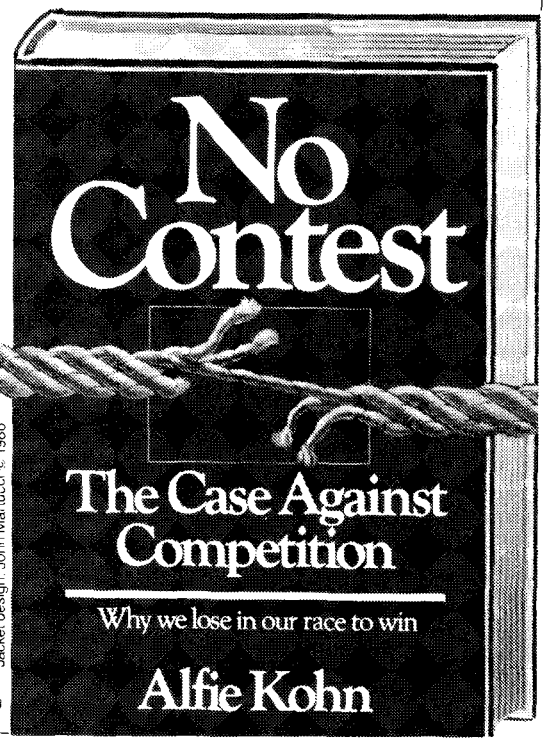

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CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS

The Cycles of American History by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.

(Houghton Mifflin, 498 pp., $22.95)

It is a tribute to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s immense talents and protean accomplishments that he seems to defy conventional classification. In the course of his 40-year career, he has been a political activist (one of the founders of Americans for Democratic Action), a public official (an assistant to President Kennedy), a campaign strategist (for Adlai Stevenson and the Kennedys), a memoirist, a political essayist, and even for a time a film critic. Above all, of course, he has been a historian—perhaps the best known and most widely read American historian of his generation. But even within the historical profession, the unusual range and variety of his work have made him difficult to categorize. His most familiar works are those examining American public life in the 20th century: his magisterial three-volume *The Age of Roosevelt* (a fourth volume is reportedly in progress), his celebrated studies of John and Robert Kennedy, his analysis of the modern presidency. Yet his first book was a highly regarded study of the 19th-century New England cleric and political activist Orestes Brownson. And probably his most influential work—a book that shaped scholarly discussion of an entire field for more than a generation—was *The Age of Jackson*, published in 1945 and recipient of the first of Schlesinger's two Pulitzer Prizes. (The second came 20 years later, for *A Thousand Days*.)

This new collection of essays reveals another area in which Schlesinger resists conventional categorization: his relationship to the dominant schools of interpretation within the historical profession. Politically, he is a well-known liberal, and his political convictions inform his scholarly work in countless ways. But liberalism takes many forms, and Schlesinger's does not fit neatly within any major scholarly camp. He has carved an interpretive niche for himself that is firmly his own.

In some respects, he is one of the last of the great "progressive" historians whose work dominated American scholarship during most of the period between World War I and World War II, and among whose most distinguished representatives was Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. The progressives (whose ranks also included Charles A. Beard and Frederick Jackson Turner) saw American history as a vast battleground in which economic or regional rivalries created continual conflicts and in which democratic elements fought constantly against the forces of entrenched privilege. Although the progressives never embraced the economic determinism of later Marxist historians, they did place economic inequality (and the struggles it inspired) at the center of the American past.

Among scholars of the postwar generation, the younger Schlesinger's own generation, the most powerful force in American historiography was a reaction against this approach and the emergence of what came to be known as "consensus" history. Consensus scholars emphasized not conflict but (in Richard Hofstadter's words) "the common climate of American opinion," the shared belief among almost all Americans in "the rights of property, the philosophy of economic individualism, the value of competition . . . the economic virtues of capitalist culture." Conflicts there had been, to be sure, but they had rarely been fundamental conflicts. Americans were in basic agreement even when they thought they differed. Schlesinger never accepted, however, the approach that came to enchant so many of his contemporaries. He never believed that surface controversies are mere distractions from broader agreement. The battles that seemed important to their contemporaries, he has always argued, should seem equally important to historians. And in his most influential historical works—his study of Jacksonian politics, his history of the New Deal—he has emphasized not continuity and consensus, but the centrality of conflicts between democratic forces and special interests.

The importance of such struggles remains very much at the center of his thinking in this book, perhaps most notably in the title essay. The idea that American history moves in "cycles," that periods of social activism alternate with periods of retreat in a reasonably predictable pattern, is not a new one. Emerson referred to it obliquely in the 1840s; Henry Adams developed it explicitly in the 1890s; and Schlesinger's father made it central to his own work. Schlesinger himself has insisted for many years on the importance of the cycle—"a continuing shift in national involvement, between public purpose and private interest"—as a key to historical explanation. The evidence, he claims, lies in the ebbs and flows of public life in the past, and particularly in the 20th century. The public activism of the early 20th century (the "progressive era") ultimately gave way to the conservatism of the 1920s, which gave way in turn to the renewal of energy of the New Deal. The postwar conservatism of the Eisenhower years succumbed in the early 1960s to the dynamism of the New Frontier and the Great Society, to be followed by another withdrawal into private interest in the 1970s and 1980s.

Troubling questions have always accompanied this theory. Schlesinger faces them squarely here. The cyclical pattern works reasonably well as a description of at least part of the American past. But can it serve, as its advocates like to claim, as a predictive device? Is the pattern simply coincidence (like the causally meaningless fact that presidents elected at 20-year intervals since 1840 have all, until now, died in office)? Or is there an internal dynamic, which makes the cycle self-generating? Schlesinger argues here that the cycle is, in fact, self-sustaining. "There is a cyclical pattern in organic nature," he notes, as well as "a cyclical basis in the very psychology of modernity." Most of all, however: "It is the generational experience that serves as the mainspring of the political cycle." Members of each generation shape their political assumptions in response to the public climate of their adolescence and early adulthood. When they come of age, usually some 20 years later, they attempt to give voice to assumptions shaped at an earlier time:

> Young men and women whose ideals were formed by TR and Wilson—Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Truman—produced the New and Fair Deals in their own maturity. The generation whose ideals were formed by FDR—John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson—produced in their maturity the New Frontier and the Great Society. In the same way the age of Kennedy touched and inspired a new generation. That generation's time is yet to come.

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Schlesinger has not answered, certainly, all the objections scholars have raised to the cycle as a basis of interpretation. He concedes, for example, that the generational view of the past must confront the fact that babies are born continuously, that "the division of people into generations seems arbitrary." His only answer is to say that most other social divisions—economic classes, for example—are to some degree arbitrary as well. The predictive possibilities of the cyclical argument would seem brighter, moreover, if there were more compelling evidence that the generation shaped by the "age of Kennedy" seemed about to produce a crusade for a restoration of public purpose. Still, he has in this essay provided a challenging basis—generally absent from earlier arguments for the "cycle"—for exploring the pattern not simply as a historical fact, but as a historical force.

WHATEVER the strengths or weaknesses of this argument, however, Schlesinger's commitment to it reveals an important facet of his own historical instincts: his emphasis on discontinuity as the central feature of the past. Not for him the consensus view of a history unbroken by fundamental conflict. The alternations in American public life between public purpose and private interest, he suggests, are not meaningless blips on the surface of broad continuities. They are the main event.

They are, moreover, to be welcomed. Some (although by no means all) consensus historians came to celebrate the absence of conflict, to welcome what they believed to be America's happy freedom from the class divisions and social turbulence that have beset other societies. But to Schlesinger (as to the progressive historians of the 1920s and 1930s), it is conflict that keeps the hope of progress and social justice alive. Indeed, he gives evidence throughout these essays of his preference for a sharply competitive, even turbulent politics over a consensual public life in which popular aspirations might not find adequate channels for expression. In his discussion of the American presidency, for example, he rejects proposals to insulate the president from the pressures of politics (through, for example, a single six-year term or a shift to a more purely parliamentary system). If anything, he argues, presidents should be *less* insulated from politics, more subject to the checks and balances of the electoral pro-

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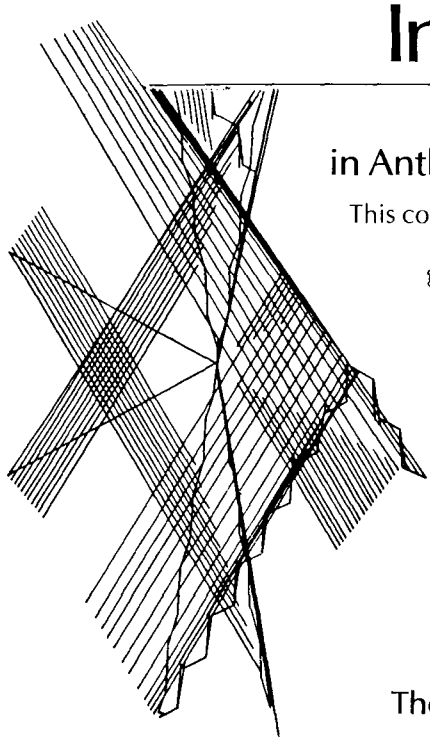

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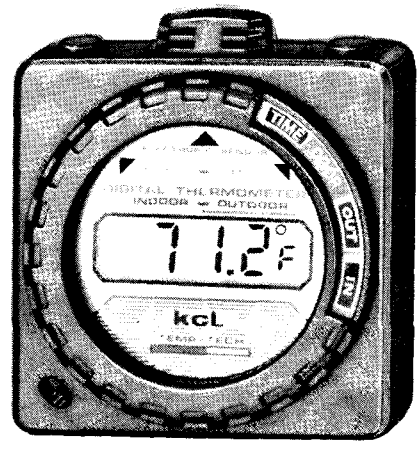

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cess and the separation of powers.

The most unusual essay in this book discusses the vice presidency, an office he proposes to abolish in favor of speedy "special elections" in the event of the death of a president. Again, the suggestion (implausible as it may be) is rooted in a belief that leadership must be subjected constantly to the healthy ferment of democracy. Perhaps that is why Schlesinger, although he has often been contemptuous of New Left historiography, is not as harshly critical of American radicals and not as aghast at their excesses during the 1960s as are many of his contemporaries. Wrongheaded as revolutionaries have been, he suggests, their agitation "exposes the hypocrisies of the standing order and sharpens objections to it." And the threat they pose "undermines the obstacles of imbecility and vested interest."

THE BELIEF in discontinuity is particularly clear in one of the book's best essays, "Vicissitudes of Presidential Reputations," in which Schlesinger takes on a generation of revisionists. For nearly two decades now, historians have been restoring the reputation of Herbert Hoover, portraying him as an important progressive whose policy innovations in the 1920s and early 1930s laid much of the groundwork for the New Deal. The inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt, they imply, was not a major turning point in our political history but another step along a broad continuum. The Eisenhower presidency, revisionists similarly argue, was not simply a somnolent interregnum between periods of dynamic reform but a time of wise and prudent restraint and healthy progress.

Schlesinger has little patience with either argument. He concedes the revisionist point that Hoover was not in all respects a hardened reactionary and that Eisenhower was more than an amiable stumblebum. But in most essential respects, he clings tightly to his own long-held views. Those familiar with his earlier discussions of the Hoover administration (in *The Crisis of the Old Order*) and the Kennedy administration (*A Thousand Days*) will recognize that Schlesinger sees no reason to recant. The New Deal and the New Frontier were, he insists, both dramatic breaks with a stagnant conservatism—evidence again of the importance of the "cycle" and the centrality of discontinuity in American history; and evidence too of his own refusal to accept the consensus view of a relatively unbroken, unconflicted past.

It would be a mistake, however, to view Schlesinger as somehow set apart from the major intellectual currents of his generation. Although he has balked at some of the assumptions of postwar historiography, in other respects his ideas have not only matched but shaped those of his contemporaries. Nowhere is that clearer than in the debate over "ideology" that did so much to guide American intellectual life in the 1940s and 1950s. Postwar intellectuals, appalled by the horrors they had seen millenarian ideologies (fascism, Stalinism, and later Maoism) produce in other societies, came to see in the more ideologically neutral world of liberal democracy a healthy antidote to dangerous political fervor. Americans, they argued, are a pragmatic, not an ideological, people. And it has been their ability to resist the appeal of fervent crusades and "total solutions" that has allowed democracy to flourish and prosper. Schlesinger himself produced one of the most eloquent expressions of this idea in his 1949 book, *The Vital Center*, which challenged the popular assumption that the center was a barren place, incapable of generating any real commitment or political energy. On the contrary, he argued, the center was not only the best defense against the dangers of millenarian excess; it was itself a vital stance, which could rely on its commitment to personal freedom to inspire social progress and public purpose.

HE CONTINUES to advance that argument today, as the eloquent concluding essay in this volume makes clear:

> The vast pervasive resistance of the psyche and of society leads some to forsake incremental change in favor of the millennial hope, "a new heaven and a new earth," the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of the proletariat. . . . Those who profess to execute the mandates of God or of History are menaces to humanity. . . . Reform avoids the arrogance of revolution. . . . The consent of the majority is essential if both the fabric of society and the freedom of the individual are to survive.

His commitment to that idea may help to explain some of his own most conspicuous political attachments. John Kennedy, for all the public passion he helped to produce, considered himself a cool pragmatist uninterested in the claims of ideology. Franklin Roosevelt, similarly, was openly and boastfully experimental, willing to tolerate any number of ideological currents but unwilling

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to commit himself irrevocably to any one of them.

Although certain themes are recurrent through much of this book, it is a diverse collection, with no single concern. It begins with an evocative essay emphasizing the self-consciously experimental origins of American democracy and debunking the idea (now enshrined in presidential rhetoric) that the founders saw the republic they were creating as the expression of a God-given plan, a "divine consecration." It includes six important essays on facets of American foreign policy, which together sharply challenge the economic determinism of some New Left historians but which reject as well the missionary vision of the nation's international role so popular among conservatives and neoconservatives. It recapitulates many of the ideas Schlesinger developed in *The Imperial Presidency* about the nature (and abuses) of presidential power, and extends the examination to the post-Nixon era. It offers some of the author's own prescriptions for dealing with our present problems. (He favors, for example, a Felix Rohatyn-like industrial policy modeled vaguely on the New Deal's National Recovery Administration.) And it expresses repeatedly one of Schlesinger's most important convictions: a rejection of historical determinism—of the idea that innate social forces ensure that events will develop in a particular way—in favor of a belief in the importance of individuals and their capacity to alter the course of history.

Like most collections of previously published work, this one suffers occasionally from redundancy. And despite a substantial effort by the author to reshape old material in light of new scholarship and recent events, there is a dated quality to at least some of these essays. The book abounds with examples of characteristics that have often irritated Schlesinger's many critics within the historical profession: frequent invocations of personal friends (John and Robert Kennedy, Reinhold Niebuhr, Averell Harriman), easy shifts back and forth between scholarly detachment and partisanship, harsh dismissal and sometimes ungenerous characterizations of historians with whom he disagrees, abundant and at times perhaps excessive displays of erudition.

But this collection reveals as well why Schlesinger, despite the countless ways in which he has violated the conventions of his profession, remains one of its most important voices. It is not simply because he possesses a literary grace that few American scholars can match, and not simply because the range of his interests and knowledge far exceeds that of most historians in this age of narrow specialization. It is because he possesses a rare ability to make history seem important, because he is willing to argue that the search for an understanding of the past is not simply an aesthetic exercise but a path to the understanding of our own time. He is a reminder to professional historians of the possibilities of reaching beyond their own ranks to the larger world in which they live.

ALAN BRINKLEY

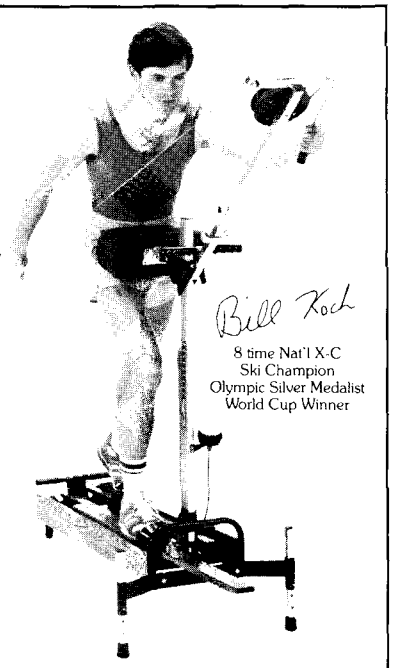
Alan Brinkley teaches American history at Harvard.

THE LION IN AUTUMN

The Fifties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the Period by Edmund Wilson edited by Leon Edel

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 663 pp., $25)

Edmund Wilson is one of those writers—George Orwell is another—who, because they acquired reputations for being intellectual loners when they were alive, are made honorary members of everyone's club after they are dead. Their nonconformity seems a promise of their integrity, and people of integrity are nice to have on one's side—especially when they are sure to remain silent. Still, integrity is not such an uncomplicated virtue. One of the valuable things about this latest edition of Wilson's journals is that it is a reminder of the price he was willing



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to pay for his independence of mind.

In one important sense, of course, Wilson was not a loner. He belonged to the literary generation that came of age in the 1920s, and he remained loyal to, although he did not sentimentalize, its ideals. It was a generation inspired, at times made almost giddy, by the luxurious culture of private life after the war and by the belief that it had been born into an American century. Its aspiration—reflected in Mencken's work on the American language, in Van Wyck Brooks's reconstruction of the American literary tradition, in Gilbert Seldes's studies of the popular arts, in Fitzgerald's novels and Wilson's criticism—was the creation of a culture that would be sophisticated without being genteel, vital without being vulgar, American without being provincial. But it was also a generation with a divided temperament. Its idealism was undermined by its cynicism, which it developed as a reaction against the war and which it sustained as a reaction against the bluenosed culture of postwar public life; and it had a hard time reconciling its distaste for much that it took to be characteristically American—the know-nothingism, the idolatry of Business—with its championing of American civilization. It was a generation for which the issue of expatriation seems always to have been a live one.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Wilson's career is a map of this ambivalence. His guide to literary modernism, *Axel's Castle* (1931), was written to clear the ground for the great American literature he thought was coming in the decade ahead, but the book contributed instead to the canonization of a distinctively European tradition. And when we read Wilson's monumental study of the literature of the American Civil War, *Patriotic Gore* (1962), we sometimes find ourselves wondering whether the book was intended to be a resurrection of a neglected national heritage or an indictment of the shallowness of American culture. Debates about the merits and demerits of American life are a continuous feature of Wilson's letters and journals, and they became more rather than less intense over the course of his life. Wilson's sense, by the early '50s, that he had established a place for himself in American letters was gratifying to him: his diary of a trip to Europe in 1954 is suffused by a cultural chauvinism that is at times overweening. But his protracted troubles later in the decade over unfiled tax returns embittered him, and in the book he wrote to protest his treatment by the IRS, *The Cold War and the Income Tax* (1963), he announced that "I have come finally to feel that this country, whether or not I continue to live in it, is no longer any place for me." His next major project, characteristically, was the plan for an "American Pléiade"—the series now at last realized as the Library of America.

Wilson's fidelity to the temper of his own generation was one of the things that led to his eventual sense of isolation, for he outlived many of the friends of his youth and outproduced all but a very few. "I do miss my friends of that period [the '20s], quite a lot of whom are dead," he told a British interviewer in 1957. "I could talk to them so much more freely than to the generation that succeeded them." And ghosts from the past pop up frequently in *The Fifties*—the ghosts of Wilson's college friends F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Peale Bishop, who both died in the early '40s; of Edna Millay, the elusive object of his desire, who died in 1950; of Christian Gauss, his Princeton teacher, who died in 1951; of his second wife, Margaret Canby, who died in an accident in 1932; of his parents and his parents' families. He dreams about the dead and seeks out the places they frequented; he is always measuring the poverty of some present experience against the richer memory of an earlier one. There is an especially poignant description of a rendezvous with James Thurber and Dorothy Parker at the Algonquin in 1958:

> It was like . . . a reunion of Civil War veterans. The G.A.R. [Grand Army of the Republic]—Raoul Fleischmann was sitting at the next table and offered to join the rally. Dorothy had somewhat deteriorated, had big pouches under her eyes. Thurber seems blinder than ever, one eye is quite gray, and his hair is completely white. I totter around with gout. We at once burst into confused but animated conversation about *The New Yorker*, the kind of thing of which nobody listening would have been able to understand a word. . . . It depressed me to think we were sitting in the same room where the Round Table had once been and where I had arranged for Dorothy to meet the Fitzgeralds for lunch. . . . Some of Dorothy's stories had been lately rejected by *The New Yorker*, and some of Thurber's pieces also.

Wilson's attachment to his generation—his friendships with colleagues whose talents had been dissipated and, in his upstate years, with local people he

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had known as a boy—was not simply old-fogeyism (though there was, quite self-consciously, something of that about it, too). It was a kind of stoicism, for keeping that company meant being continually reminded of his own aging. Some readers of *The Fifties* may find Wilson's postcoital analyses of his sexual performances the opposite of stimulating; but there is something moving about them, and something essential to the persona the notebooks evoke. They stand for wholeness in a world in which everything else stands for decay.

EVERYTHING, that is, except the writing. The '50s marked the beginning of a second life in Wilson's career: the life of reprintings. In 1952, Jason Epstein brought out *To the Finland Station* as an Anchor paperback; it had a great success, and it was followed by Anchor reprints of essays from *The Triple Thinkers* (1938) and *The Wound and the Bow* (1941) (in *Eight Essays*); of book reviews from 1920 to 1950 (in *A Literary Chronicle*); of reportage from the '20s and '30s (in *The American Earthquake*). Wilson himself collected his shorter pieces in *Classics and Commercials* (1950) and *The Shores of Light* (1952), and his projects during the decade included fieldwork for his book on the Iroquois of upstate New York; the study of Hebrew, which led to his interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls; plays, poetry, and a novel that never materialized; and the reading of a library of half-forgotten books for *Patriotic Gore*.

But all this work, and the recognition that accompanied it, coincided with a general withdrawal from the cultural scene. Wilson had bought the house in Wellfleet that became his permanent home in 1940. And after his mother died, in 1951, he began refurbishing the old family house in Talcottville, New York, and spending his summers there (mostly alone, since his wife disliked the house, the scenery, and the neighbors); his winters he spent (with typical perversity) on the Cape. He traveled, to Europe and Israel; he visited friends in Cambridge and New Haven and New York; he lectured (for the money; he admitted to being a poor speaker) at Princeton and Harvard. And he maintained his enormous correspondence. But the representative document of this period is the famous all-purpose regrets card he had printed up: "Edmund Wilson regrets that it is impossible for him to: read manuscripts, write articles or books to order, write forewords or introductions, make statements for publicity purposes, do any kind of editorial work, judge literary contests, give interviews, conduct educational courses," etc.

NO DOUBT some of the causes of Wilson's withdrawal were temperamental and idiosyncratic. He had been through the wars—literary, political, and marital—and regarded himself, with some justification, as *hors de combat*, entitled to view the contemporary fray from a remoter eminence. He had been an advocate (though a qualified one) of modernism in art and literature, and modernism had won the day; he had been skeptical (despite some sympathies) about communism, and anti-communism, though of a virulent strain he abhorred, was in the ascendancy. He had stayed in America, and it was clear to him, especially after the postwar tour he recorded in *Europe without Baedeker* (1947), that American culture, for better or worse, had become the dominant culture internationally. More personally, Wilson discovered in the Stone House (the name for the family house in Talcottville) a kind of living symbol formed by the intersection of his personal history with the history of the country. He is quite taken with this notion in the notebooks:

> Talcottville is in a sense typical of America itself: people always moving on, always making a wider world. During my lifetime and since my childhood, we have got beyond the United States themselves, which at one time contained us completely, upon which, in the twenties, we determinedly and anxiously concentrated, as they must have on their early communities in the early days of Talcottville, but to which we may one day return from a bigger world as the Bakers and Talcotts [the village's founding families] do to Talcottville.

And elsewhere: "Talcottville, in spite of my scrutiny of it, I have not yet got to the bottom of. But of course my special feeling about it . . . is due to something that really existed, is itself one of the data of history." And even more simply: "Nobler country here, nobler people—part of the whole moral foundation of my life."

But Wilson's withdrawal was symptomatic of, whether or not it was motivated by, a shifting of forces in American intellectual life. He was, as usual, perspicacious about the trend. "The literary worker of the twenties," he wrote in 1943, belonged to

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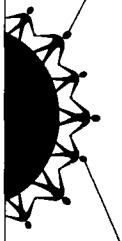

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a professional group, now becoming extinct and a legend, in which the practice of letters was a common craft and the belief in its value a common motivation. The journalist of the later era is troubled at the thought of a writer who works up his own notions and signs his own name; and for the literary man in college, incorporated in that quite different organism, the academic profession, with its quite other hierarchies of value and competitions for status, the literary man of the twenties presents himself as the distant inhabitant of another intellectual world.

The writer "who works up his own notions": the phrase is perfectly self-descriptive. It expresses the strength of the independent man of letters—he answers only to his own sense of what is important—and his weakness: with no institution, no newspaper or university, to direct his researches, he is the victim of his eccentricities. In Wilson's case, the institutional pressure that pushed him to the margins of his discipline was the rise of academic criticism.

IT IS EASY enough to document the process by which criticism of Wilson's type—criticism that regarded literature as part of a social and political landscape, that took an equal interest in authors and in texts, that felt a responsibility to render judgments on the works it discussed, that was premised on the notion that the critic's experience of literature was continuous with the ordinary reader's—was made to seem of secondary significance. One has only to mention the titles of the works that prepared the way for the institutionalization of the New Criticism in the '40s and '50s to see how little room they left for a critic like Wilson: Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's *Understanding Poetry* (1938) and *Understanding Fiction* (1943), which made the formal analysis of the poem or novel the critic's primary job; René Wellek and Austin Warren's *Theories of Literature* (1949), which distinguished between "extrinsic" (biographical, historical, etc.) and "intrinsic" (formalist) approaches to literature, with a clear bias toward the latter; W. K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks's *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (1957), which made the academic New Criticism of the '50s seem the natural culmination of a tradition of philosophical aesthetics stretching back to Plato. And the book that began the business of supplanting the New Criticism, Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), was even more restrictive: it relegated all forms of critical value judgment to the realm of what Frye dismissively referred to as "the history of taste" and divorced completely the activity of critical analysis from the experience of reading.

Wilson's response to this transformation in the nature of criticism took two forms. His criticism became, first, more anthropological. "I seem nowadays to be obsessed with minorities," he wrote to his old friend John Dos Passos in 1964, ". . . feeling that I belong to one myself." Wilson's interest in the Essenes (the sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls), in the Iroquois, in Haitian and Canadian writing, in the popular fiction of the Civil War period, represents, even if unintentionally, a vigorous and in many ways salutary reaction against the highly canonized, highly aestheticized critical interests of the academy. Wilson's fascination with the Iroquois of upstate New York—we get a strong flavor of it in *The Fifties*—is a nice example of this fresh turn of his critical attention. It is clear that Wilson was intrigued by a culture that was Western and yet like nothing else in the culture of the West, and it is clear, too, that what he admired about the Iroquois was their utter failure to become bourgeois in the midst of a country that was the fullest flower of bourgeois civilization. What Wilson disliked most about modern life was the homogenization of cultural differences; the Iroquois, whose cause had been well lost for more than a century and who could scarcely explain the few indigenous rituals they had left, stood in Wilson's eyes for the intransigence of minority separateness.

Wilson's second mode of response to the eclipse of the higher literary journalism as a critical style of first importance was less ambitious. He simply ignored the competition. Perhaps he didn't consider the situation to be adversarial; perhaps he felt satisfied with the audience his work had won for him, and was content to leave academic criticism to the academics (though there was that splendid late burst of petulance, "The Fruits of the MLA," in 1968). But he seems not to have reviewed a single work of New Criticism, or to have engaged himself in any of the theoretical disputes about literature and criticism that grew out of the modernist tradition and that have since become, for academics, the very grist of the discipline. The other side of his growing interest in minority cultures was the general relaxation of his interest in and enthusiasm for the major British and American writers. Wilson's name is often evoked by people who lament the loss of a criticism that maintained a faith in the social and moral value of great literature; but the lesson of the final decades of Wilson's career is a little more ambiguous. If he preserved such a faith, it was by leaving the "great" to others, and by discovering the virtues of the not-so-great literatures that the majority literature was threatening with extinction. At the end of his life, he was teaching himself Hungarian.

EVEN IF we take a different slant from that of the academic literary histories of the '50s, fitting Wilson into a critical tradition is not a simple task. He is sometimes called a psychoanalytic critic, on the evidence of the thesis of *The Wound and the Bow*—that the imaginative writer creates to relieve himself of some psychic distress. But this notion receives only the most general sort of support from psychoanalytic theory; and in any event, it is offered by Wilson more as a metaphor, with the myth of Philoctetes used as an allegorical touchstone, than as a scientific explanation founded on a model of the mind. Similarly, placing Wilson in the tradition of Marxist criticism, on the basis of the emphasis in various essays (such as those in *The Triple Thinkers*) on the historical circumstances of literary production, is unsatisfactory, and again the problem is theoretical. For Wilson is a singularly undialectical writer; his literary histories have a conventional rise-and-fall shape to them, and the chapter on the dialectic in *To the Finland Station*, in which the dialectic is treated as a methodological gimmick that doesn't work, is the weakest and most uninformed in the book.

Wilson's work really belongs to the history of journalism, and it is only the latter-day prejudice in favor of professional "scholarship" that makes us regard this judgment as pejorative. Journalistic criticism has a far longer tradition than academic criticism, and its contributions to the general literary culture are more pervasive and, sociologically, more profound. The characteristic virtues of Wilson's writing, the qualities that make readers return to his essays even after their arguments seem to have been superseded, are journalistic virtues: the commitment to the language of the general, rather than the specialist, intelligence; the sophisticated curiosity that confronts the high and the popular, the

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new and the outré, with equal poise; most of all the ability, displayed for many readers most memorably in *To the Finland Station*, to give ideas the quality of actions.

BUT Wilson's most persistent shortcoming was also a journalistic one: the compulsion to discover the hidden mechanism that explains everything. The criticisms of individual writers in *Axel's Castle* retain their authority even today, but the book as a whole is structured on a pendulum model of literary history that Wilson derived from Alfred North Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* (a book he admired extravagantly) and that has, as a historical tool, only neatness and predictability to recommend it. More significantly, the psychic "wound" theory of creativity advanced in *The Wound and the Bow*, if followed to its logical conclusion, ends up depriving the writer of conscious control over his creation, and thus of any credit he might want to claim for its success. And though *Patriotic Gore* is devoted in large part to attacking the grip of Calvinism, with its reduction of everything to the formula of "God's will," on the Northern mind, the book itself proposes a theory of history that is even more reductive—the "sea-slug" explanation for war: aggression is the biological instinct of the bigger entity to ingest the smaller.

In shorter essays, this penchant for the lowest-common-denominator explanation becomes something worse than a tic: one approaches, for instance, the chapters called "Religion" and "Sex" in *A Piece of My Mind* (1956) with trepidation, sensing that everything will be hung on some unqualified, illusion-shattering definition. ("Religion is the cult of a god, or gods, conceived in supernatural terms," begins the first essay; "The purpose of sexual intercourse, and hence of what we call love, is to secure the survival of the human race and, if possible, to improve its breed" is the opening salvo of the second. "What we call love" is surely a classic of the exposé style.) But in the longer works, this habit somehow matters less. Perhaps because, by proposing to explain so much, they in fact explain so little, Wilson's hedgehog formulations tend to shrink into the background, and not to interfere with the particular pleasure his writing affords: the feeling that you are being given the free run of a mind in which every item is in stock.

The Fifties is certainly the most readable of the posthumous editions of the notebooks since *The Twenties*, which Wilson himself edited just before his death. One reason for their readability is that it was in the early '50s that Wilson apparently first conceived of his notebooks as publishable items, so that he became more conscientious about making the writing in them clear and complete. (Though at the same time one senses some self-censorship at work: the episode with the IRS, which occupied Wilson for many years in the '50s and which is described as a torment in *The Cold War and the Income Tax*, is mentioned only peripherally.) The annotation is on the same sound level as in the previous entries in the series, though Elena Wilson's wonderful edition of her husband's *Letters on Literature and Politics* is a reminder of what really inspired editing can do with this material. That *The Fifties* is also the fattest volume of the notebooks thus far is the consequence of a somewhat puzzling editorial decision. Wilson was an exceedingly rapid writer: his seems to have been one of those rare cases in which fluency on the page actually does mirror fluency of composition. When he used his notebooks to record thoughts and incidents to be incorporated later into books, there was, apart from omissions and corrections, very little done in the way of revision. Both *Upstate* and *Apologies to the Iroquois* were pieced together from notebook entries, and for some reason substantial passages from those books, in their journal-entry incarnations, are included in *The Fifties*. If Wilson had been in the habit of revising his material heavily when he transposed it from diary to article and from article to book, it might have been useful to have the earliest drafts available. As it is, one experiences the odd illusion that Wilson's books have somehow been cribbed from to fill out his journals.

LOUIS MENAND

Revising the Nazi past for the Kohl era.

IMMORAL EQUIVALENCE

BY CHARLES S. MAIER

GERMANS HAVE long understood that history matters. For much of the postwar period their historical scholarship pondered, if imperfectly, the breakdown of democracy in the 1920s and 1930s, and the lessons of National Socialism. But now a new coalition of historians regrets that the obsession with the traumas of Nazism, the lost war, and the division of the country have denied Germans the chance to work through a less problematic, longer run national history; or so these historians allege. They appear preoccupied with the idea that those who define a people's history structure its sense of community and politics. As one of their number, Michael Stürmer, a professor at Erlangen and a speechwriter for Chancellor Kohl, has argued, today's West Germans seem hungry for usable history: "Whoever supplies memory, shapes concepts, and interprets the past will win the future."

The recent campaign of these German historians to interpret the past has proved profoundly disturbing, however, as they have sought not to deny Nazi crimes but to remove their special nimbus of horror. For obvious reasons the search for a usable past in present-day Germany is a difficult one. Indeed, the catchword that Germans have applied, quite appropriately, to the Nazi experience has often been "the unmastered past." It is not clear how such a past should be mastered, how historical consciousness comes to terms with a national experience that remains the standard for collective brutality. History has a twofold mission: it is analytic and imaginative. It is supposed to provide a convincing explanation, to answer, why did it happen? or, how could it happen? But history is also expected to convey some sort of lived resonance. Obviously it cannot convey the experience itself, but at least an echo of the experience may

Charles S. Maier is professor of modern European history at Harvard University.

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reverberate in the reader's imagination. How, then, can history ever really "master" the murder factories that curved in a crescent of death from Auschwitz in Silesia, east to Belzec, then north to Majdanek, to Sobibór and Treblinka—killing pens for Slavs, for gypsies, and above all for the Jews?

IF IT IS not apparent how historians should "master" this past, it is quite clear how they can evade it. Call it Bitburg history, when historians of mass murder relativize the Holocaust, search for alternative horrors that other peoples have perpetrated, link slayers and slain in a dialectic of victimhood. The trivialization of memory was exemplified by Bitburg: at first glance, only a public relations botch by two leaders with a woefully deficient sense of history. For Helmut Kohl, however, Ronald Reagan's gesture was politically important. If the NATO allies were determined to commemorate their wartime comradeship, then full accreditation of a Christian Democratic Federal Republic required that Germany's wartime sacrifices also be enshrined in the brotherhood of arms—a reconciliation that had been denied it at the D-day anniversary of June 1984. Unfortunately, Bitburg, it turned out, was the resting place for 47 SS soldiers. Only 47 next to so many thousands of ordinary soldiers—and in any case not representatives of the SS *Einsatzgruppen* charged with exterminations, but youth from more honorable elite combat units. Still, Valhalla was tainted, Reagan embarrassed, and Kohl confused. The remedy was for Reagan to compensate by visiting Bergen-Belsen. Perhaps if Bitburg had harbored the remains of 100 SS dead, Buchenwald, too, might have been included in this parody of equal time.

The German reaction to Bitburg revealed how widespread was the feeling that remorse was being demanded for too long. When would the new generation of Germans no longer have to atone for the sins of their fathers? Had not the Federal Republic paid large reparations to Israel? Was it not among the most stable democracies, the most loyal of NATO partners? Only a few spokesmen, most eloquently the Federal president, Richard von Weizsäcker, admitted that Germany's sort of debt is never really acquitted.

Recently the controversy about the normalization of German history moved from Bitburg to the academy. Early this year Andreas Hillgruber, a respected Cologne University scholar who has written extensively on Hitler's strategies during the Second World War, produced a small volume that was published by the conservative publisher Siedler. Entitled *Two Sorts of Destruction: The Shattering of the German Reich and the End of European Jewry*, it did not seem destined for notoriety until Jürgen Habermas, Germany's leading contemporary philosopher and critic on the left, attacked the volume as an ominous portent of conservative trends under the Kohl government. By bracketing the defeat of Hitler's regime (honored in Hillgruber's title with the label "German Reich," the designation that the German nation-state, including the Weimar Republic, had claimed since unification) with the genocide carried out by that very regime, Hillgruber's work seemed "scandalous." For Habermas, and others, common decency should have forbidden that the two developments be juxtaposed. In its "apologetic tendency" to depict the German nation as having been as much a victim as the Jewish people, Hillgruber's book allegedly typified the attempt of conservative intellectuals and historians to allow West Germans to normalize their past and claim a national history. Moreover, Hillgruber's book seemed designed to revive the sort of nationalist anticommunism for which there are no enemies to the right.

WHAT DID Hillgruber intend with his 100-page essay? The major chapter in the book concerns the collapse of the eastern front in the winter of 1944-45. Evoking the Wehrmacht's terrible mission in the winter of 1945, Hillgruber has written, is among the most difficult challenges a historian can face. He refers to the harrowing winter flight before the Russians. Hitler had given orders for impossible defenses of fortress cities; Soviet troops arrived with apparent license to rape and assault. Millions of German civilians and soldiers waited for occasional trains in bombed-out stations, caravanned through the Prussian forests, or precariously sailed across the Baltic to Jutland, often harassed by their own fanatic Nazi officials. Hillgruber's purpose in depicting these conditions is to defend the German army against the charge that by fighting against the Soviet troops they were abetting Hitler's work of massacring the Jews, despite the fact that historians have not taxed the Wehrmacht with defending East Prussia

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so that Hitler could keep massacring Jews. In the end Hillgruber demands that his German readers identify neither with the Nazis' victims, nor even with the German resistance, but with the tragically beset soldiers:

> If the historian gazes on the winter catastrophe of 1944-45, only one position is possible [and that is that] he must identify himself with the concrete fate of the German population in the East and with the desperate and sacrificial exertions of the German army of the East and the German Baltic navy, which sought to defend the population from the orgy of revenge of the Red Army, the mass rapine, the arbitrary killing, and the compulsory deportations.

Hillgruber goes on to claim, moreover, that Stalin, Roosevelt, and above all Churchill had long harbored designs to dismember Germany. It does not seem relevant to Hillgruber's way of thinking that German aggression might indeed have led the Allies to contemplate partition; in any case the notion was rejected in theory, and partition came about only as a result of circumstances when the war ended. Hillgruber's historical contribution to "winning the future" thus amounts to the old Prusso-German lament, dusted off and refurbished, that the Machiavellian British were always conspiring to encircle the Reich. Predictably enough, the essay closes with a lament that after 1945, Prussia and Germany would no longer be able to fulfill their mediating role between East and West. But precisely what sort of "mediating role" had brought all those German soldiers to Stalingrad in the first place?

Unfortunately this is vulgar *Historismus* at best. It is not the job of the historian to identify with one group of contending personalities and interests; it is to allow each to speak for itself, and then to explore the alternative perspectives from which their decisions might be viewed. It is no wonder that Hillgruber's second (and brief) chapter on the extermination of the Jews might seem pallid after the emotional exercise in "identification" that precedes it. No depiction of sealed freight cars, purposeful starvation, degradation, and the final herding to the gas chambers parallels Hillgruber's vivid evocation of the East Prussian collapse. Not that Hillgruber minimizes the crimes of the SS (though he ignores the massacres of Red Army prisoners by his heroic Wehrmacht). He understands that German anti-Semitism was periodically virulent before the Nazis, and he suggests that even a traditionally authoritarian regime would have instituted at least the equivalent of the Nuremberg laws. Hillgruber's is not exactly an evil book, but it is badly balanced; and its particular imbalance opens the way to apologia.

Certainly Hillgruber's slim volume was less egregious than the essay by Ernst Nolte that appeared in the eminent center-conservative daily the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in June. *Vergangenheit die nicht Vergehen will*—"The Past That Will Not Pass Away"—was originally intended as an address to a prestigious annual conclave of public figures and intellectuals in Frankfurt, but Nolte's invitation was suddenly withdrawn. Nolte is arguably one of the most brilliant, and certainly the most brooding, German thinkers about history. He calls himself the last practitioner of "philosophical history." Trained in Heideggerian metaphysics, he made his mark as a historian of political ideas with his *Three Faces of Fascism*, which appeared in 1963. That study examined the protofascism inherent in French reactionary thought, the paradigmatic Italian movement, and then its radicalized German "fulfillment." Thus no "apologetic tendency," no ambiguity in the judgment of the fascist phenomenon, was really predictable from this suggestive, almost Hegelian magnum opus, in which fascist political practice emanated ineluctably from ideological premises and a logic of history. More problematic was Nolte's murky rumination of 1976, *Germany and the Cold War*. Its target was the strident left-wing German student movement of the late 1960s ("the party of the GDR"),

ATLANTIS

Dreaming of our golden boulevards and temples,
our painted palaces set in torchlit gardens,
our spires and minarets, our emerald harbor,
you won't want to hear about the city we knew:

the narrow neighborhoods of low white houses
where workmen come home for lunch and an afternoon nap,
old women in sweatstained penitential black
ease their backaches gratefully against doorways

and the widow who keeps the corner grocery
anxiously watches her child dragging his toy
who was sickly from birth and everyone knows must die soon.
You won't want to know how we lived,

the hot sun, the horsetraders cheating each other out of boredom,
in the brothels the prostitutes curling each others' hair
while the madam limps upstairs to feed the canary,
the young louts smoking in bare cafés

where old men play dominoes for glasses of cognac—
and how can we blame you?
We too were in love with something we never could name:
we never could let ourselves say

that the way the harbor flashed like bronze at sunset
or the hilltowns swam in the twilight like green stars
were only tricks of the light and meant nothing.
We too believed that a moment would surely come

when our lives would stand hard and pure, like marble statues.
And because we were, after all, only a poor city,
a city like others, of sailors' bars and sunflowers,
we gave ourselves up to be only a name,

an image of temples and spires and jewelled gardens—
for which reason we are envied of all peoples,
and even now could not say
what life would have to be, for us to have chosen it.

KATHA POLLITT

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whose attacks scarred Nolte at the University of Marburg before he moved to Berlin. He also seemed curiously obsessed with Israel—the nation of the former victims, whose army had won territory and statehood while Germany had lost both. Germany was fated to be torn between the two competing ideological visions that together had defeated Nazism: communism and democracy. Nolte called for a historical sense that could rehabilitate the reputation of the old Bismarckian Reich and recognize that every major nation (Britain and the United States excepted) has had "its own Hitler era, with its monstrosities and sacrifices."

Nolte's notorious essay of June elaborated these hints of a decade ago. Germans remain preoccupied with their Nazi past, Nolte implies, in an almost neurotic and ahistorical manner. Isn't there some justification for calling a halt to further obsessive re-examination? Isn't the talk about "the guilt of the Germans," he explicitly asks, all too reminiscent of Nazi charges about "the guilt of the Jews"? It is a startling deficiency of the literature on Nazism, Nolte charges, that it will not recognize that, with the exception of poison gas, every atrocity of the Nazis was committed by the Bolsheviks in the early 1920s:

> Did the Nazis carry out, did Hitler carry out, an "Asiatic" deed [the term that one of Hitler's later advisers supposedly used in horror at the 1915 Armenian massacres] perhaps only because they regarded themselves and their ilk as the potential or real victims of an "Asiatic" deed? Wasn't the Gulag Archipelago more an origin than Auschwitz? Wasn't class murder on the part of the Bolsheviks logically and actually prior to racial murder on the part of the Nazis?

NOLTE WAS seconded in August by Joachim Fest, editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and author of a major study of Hitler and a useful collective biography published in English as *The Face of the Third Reich*. Fest's main concern was to criticize Habermas's attack on Hillgruber and Nolte. How could Habermas have overlooked Nolte's chief concern, the connection between Bolshevik and Nazi mass murder? To drive home the notion that genocide was a widespread occurrence, Fest illustrated his essay with a photograph of skulls accumulated by the Khmer Rouge and quoted a Toheka leader's exhortation that the bourgeoisie had to be exterminated as a class. Not

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■ In the heart of the Middle East, Syria constantly threatens Jordan. It tirelessly works to overthrow the regime in Baghdad. Its designs on Lebanon are well-known. Iraq is one of the most aggressive, and though at present much concerned with its war with Iran, spews subversion and terrorism against its Arab neighbors.

■ The record of aggression by Arabs against non-Arab states is as bloody. Libya has invaded Chad. It is involved in subversion and conspiracy on a global scale. Syria is in constant conflict with Turkey and has vowed to annex the Turkish region of Alesandretta, "as soon as we settle the score with the Zionist enemy".

■ Iraq, of course, is a special case. It perceived post-revolutionary Iran as weak and ripe for plunder. The six-year war shows no sign of abating. It is one of the bloodiest conflicts in recent world history.

■ Domestic violence is a constant in the Arab world. Virtually every Arab leader has been the target of assassination. In Syria, an officer corps dominated by the minority Alawites suppresses dissent with mass murder. In February 1982, President Assad's forces killed up to 25,000 civilians in the city of Hama and, according to *The New York Times*, "turned half the town into a parking lot".

■ And then, of course, there is Lebanon. Feuding sects in that unhappy country have battled each other for centuries. Since the outbreak of open civil war about ten years ago, as many as 200,000 people have died—with no end in sight.

■ But the Arabs reserve their most aggressive fury against the non-Arabs living among them. Arab violence against the Jews, inside and outside Israel, is common knowledge. But Berbers, Kurds, Copts, Circassians, Christians, and Blacks are mercilessly persecuted and, where possible, bloodily exterminated. Blacks are routinely kept as slaves in Saudi Arabia. The slaughter of the ancient Assyrian community in Iraq, the cruel fate of over 500,000 Blacks in Southern Sudan, and the forcible resettlement of over 200,000 Kurds are a few examples of this never-ending bloodshed.

None of these conflicts has anything to do with Israel. All of this fury would continue unabated if Israel did not exist. Violence is a fact of political life in the Arab world. The root causes of upheaval in the Arab world are the Arabs' radicalism, their religious fundamentalism, and their xenophobic hatreds. The "Palestinian problem" could have been solved almost 40 years ago. It's being kept alive by those whose political purposes it serves. It's not the *cause* of this violence. It's just one of its many manifestations.

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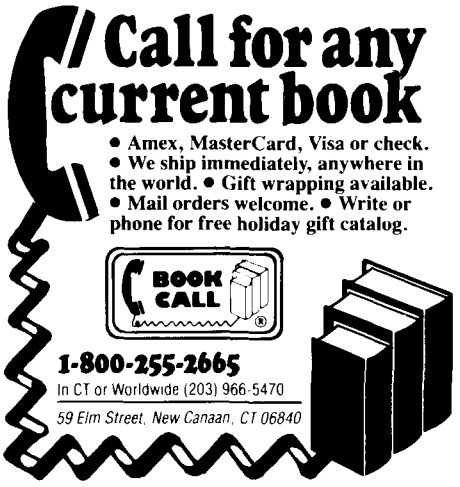
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only were the Nazi and the Bolshevik murders equivalent, Fest suggested, but it is very likely that Hitler was influenced, in the panicky condition of Germany of 1919, by admittedly exaggerated reports of atrocities from Russia. In post-World War I Germany, the core of truth in these reports gave Hitler's "extermination complexes a real background." Fest claims, moreover, that Nazism got the worse press largely because it was more visibly "mechanized." He does not acknowledge that mechanization and bureaucratic arrangements horrify not because squeamish historians prefer pastoral mass murder as in Cambodia, but because "mechanization" testifies to intent and pathological planning.

Comparative genocide has turned out to be a capacious bandwagon. Fest's outrage, not at genocide but at Habermas's assault on the fudging of the distinctions between genocides, was endorsed in a pompous defense of the historian's lofty search for science by Klaus Hildebrand, historian of Nazi foreign policy at the University of Bonn. Distinguishing between planned genocide and war crimes in the field or pogromlike outbursts, Hildebrand admits that the former was carried out only by Hitler's Germany "under the sign of racial domination, and Stalin's Soviet Union under the sign of class domination." Genocide evidently loves company. What *Wissenschaft* demonstrates is that Germany only followed the Slavic lead.

WHY ISN'T the Holocaust relative? It would hardly seem necessary to answer the question, but these German historians require an answer. Of course numbers are important. The more innocents killed, the worse. And the number killed in the Soviet Union—even excluding the reprisals of the civil war—may well have exceeded the toll taken by the SS. "The Armenian Holocaust" alone probably cost over a million lives. And the historian Richard Lukas has now asked that Polish gentiles be recognized as co-victims of the Nazis in a "forgotten holocaust." There are tears enough, in short, in the histories of many peoples.

Still, the Final Solution was different. Years ago Raymond Aron answered the question posed by Nolte and Fest: "Hostility based on the class struggle has taken on no less extreme or monstrous forms than that based on the incompatibility of race," he wrote. "But if we wish to 'save the concepts,' there is a difference between a philosophy whose logic is monstrous, and one which can be given a monstrous interpretation." The Holocaust was no mere wave of killing. It was a systematic effort to exterminate *all* the Jews under direct German control, and to pressure German allies or occupied governments to surrender the Jews temporarily beyond the reach of the SS. That effort at ethnic round-up and total extermination still separates the *furor teutonicus* from Stalinist terror. Granted, the Soviets, too, periodically targeted their terror on those, such as bourgeois parents or kulaks, bearing ascriptive characteristics that could not easily be cast aside. But they never aspired to destroy physically every individual who bore those stigmata. Destroying a class might mean dispossessing its members, not slaying them all. In addition, Soviet camps were never exclusively dedicated to extermination, no matter how cynically they were programmed to encourage brutality and the destruction of their inmates.

Indeed, terror played different roles in the two regimes, a difference often overlooked after Hannah Arendt and others focused on terror's common function in all forms of totalitarian control. If one was compliant and quiet and Aryan in the Third Reich, life could go on. Terror established the perimeter of the racial community, confirmed membership for the obedient within, warned them not to resist, and surrendered those without to lawless brutality. Under Stalin, terror raged precisely to shatter any predictability. No citizen could be sure he or she had not betrayed the revolution. The Nazis staged only two "judicial" purges as such, each probably removing no more than 1,000 to 1,500 "conspirators": the 1934 decimation of the Storm Troops, and the 1944 reprisals against the resistance. The Soviet purges of the 1930s unleashed terror against millions. But precisely this strategy of "random" brutality meant that Soviet murder did not amount to a Final Solution.

WHAT PURPOSE does the claim of comparable genocides serve for the German intellectuals who insist upon it? Nolte seems to be the only scholar to whom one may attribute, if not an anti-Semitic agenda, at least a love-hate preoccupation with Israel. But neither Jews nor Israel are the real stake in this controversy. The question, as Stürmer recognized, is who shall master the German present and the German future.

In 1983, at a major conference of historians in Berlin's Reichstag building, those who repeatedly returned to the

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uniqueness of Nazi anti-Semitism and the unparalleled radicalism of Hitler's Jewish policies were the more centrist and conservative German historians; their objective seemed to be to discredit a historiography of the left (but not only of the left) that has tried to group Mussolini's movement and German National Socialism as species of a common fascism. During the 1960s the comparison of different fascist regimes and their alleged commonality with capitalism had become a historical leitmotiv of the leftist student movement. As the final speaker of the symposium baldly charged, the late 1960s had witnessed "the ideological and political transformation of the debate over fascism into a means of delegitimizing the political system of the Federal Republic." It had become subversive.

THUS the conservative historians' insistence on the integral role of Nazism's anti-Semitism helped them roll back the clichés of Marxist historiography. But now it appears that that victory was not enough. With the battle against the Marxist "fascism theory" won, and a militant student movement no longer menacing, the conservatives can proceed to tackle the normalization of national consciousness: the need to instill West Germany with as much nationhood as its partitioned existence permits. In today's world, this project is probably no longer dangerous; Stürmer has insisted that it entails emphasizing the Federal Republic's loyalties to the West, not hankering for a neutralist reunification. Still, this revisionism can be offensively forgetful. It also forges a curious alliance that some historians may well have reason to repent. For it brings together those who claim to care about history with the beer-hall crew who want nothing more than to forget it.

To their credit, West Germans have usually been willing to face up to the past, even if as individuals they did not want to confront it. As a society, at least, they have consistently elected representatives who negotiated reparations with Israel and boundaries with Poland. Unlike the Austrians, it is doubtful that they would have allowed a Waldheim to climb to the state presidency (even though some of their politicians do not have immaculate pasts). Chancellor Kohl, in any event, is young enough not to bear that burden. But unburdened, Kohl is insensitive in ways that most of his older predecessors could not have been. He, too, claims to be a student of history. But whose history will he learn?

TRB, *from page 6*

increase the total blood supply. In part because there are other dangers from donated blood, primarily hepatitis. Although no one is in a panic about it, your chance of dying from hepatitis in a blood transfusion is about four in 10,000—25 to 100 times your chance of getting AIDS from a transfusion. Actually, your chance of catching fatal hepatitis from the blood supply is about as great as your chance of catching AIDS would be if there were no AIDS test. But the hepatitis risk has been there all along, and no one was pushing autologous blood very hard until just now. In part, then, the medical establishment is pandering to our society's chronic inability to think rationally about tiny risks of disastrous outcomes.

The larger risk in all this is the erosion of the voluntary system. The Red Cross is fighting a probably losing battle against the growth of so-called "directed donations," in which friends and relatives collect blood for a specific recipient. Doctors argue that this blood is no safer than the common pool, and possibly less safe since donors may be under special pressure to hide sexual and drug habits. An even more insidious development is the re-emergence of commercial blood banks—not to buy blood, but to charge you a fee for taking your blood and freezing it. Doctors protest in vain that when blood is needed, it is likely to be either in an emergency, with no time to get the frozen supply, or in elective surgery, with plenty of time to store up fresh blood beforehand. But reason is taking a backseat.

The spread of autologous and directed blood is a characteristic development of the Reagan era—a narrowing of the sense of community from society as a whole to one's own friends, family, and good self. Economically, it's a different kind of step backward. If commercial blood is a metaphor for efficient capitalism, and voluntary blood is a metaphor for benign socialism, autologous blood is a metaphor for pre-capitalist self-sufficiency, the world where every family grew its own food and made its own clothes. This was not a world worth envying. Philosophers agree: exchange—whether the capitalist bargain or the socialist gift—makes for greater prosperity and happiness.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Satire Gap

SPY MAGAZINE, CURRENTLY TRYING to poke through the surface with its second issue, is yet another attempt at filling the Great American Satire Gap. Good luck. In addition to the usual start-up problems of a new publication, *Spy* has to make its way through a field clogged with short-lived predecessors. *Mole*, for example, a more political effort of a few years ago, burrowed away forever after only two issues. Is the country ready to sustain satire, to support domestic versions of *Private Eye*? The curious phenomenon of the sick topical joke—Chernobyl jokes, Challenger jokes, What's-the-Frequency? jokes—has swept the country this year. But unlike the topical street humor of Europe, the Middle East, or even the Soviet Union, America's topical jokes are devoid of political content. The new sick jokes are merely updates of the 19th-century verses about Little Willie, who tortured his pets and siblings; now they are wrapped, like aromatic fish, in newspaper. Satire, by and large, is still closing on Saturday, except for the determinedly juvenile approach of a *Mad* or the acned gross-out humor of a *National Lampoon*. Serious satire—not the oxymoron it may appear—is a cultural niche that refuses to be filled here. Look at the effort to translate Britain's vicious but hilarious "Spitting Image" to U.S. TV. In Britain, the show is completely political. Here, the president, the queen, and the pope were thrown overboard to make fun instead of celebrities like Prince.

AMERICAN CULTURE DOES MAKE ROOM for one figure at a time in a given medium. There are, for example, Mark Russell and Art Buchwald. And Charles Osgood offers light, topical verse along with his stints as a CBS radio newsman, a unique balancing act. But such figures are not satirists. Their form is the inoffensive humor of gentle prodding. During one of Russell's shows shortly after the massacre of U.S. Marines in Beirut, he made the error of saying something that sounded serious (read: offensive), and later had to apologize. Russell's PBS audience doesn't tune in to hear anything harsh; it wants a few giggles with piano accompaniment. The closest thing to satire with teeth that the culture is sustaining is *Doonesbury*, and Trudeau's getting away with it because his medium is the comic strip, and, ergo, not recognizable as a serious form. Of course, Trudeau is quite serious, and papers regularly pull the strip, alter it, or run it with disclaimers or expository prefaces. Plenty of explanations have been offered for the failure of American satire, including the lack of a politics to satirize. Obviously, we have a politics. Obviously, we're willing to laugh at it. But Americans still resist thinking about either their politics or society *while* laughing; given the missed opportunities of recent years, those are two parallel strains in the national character that may meet only at infinity.

A FEW WEEKS AGO, Washington's Circle Theatre, the city's premier repertory house since 1957, closed. What dimmed the houselights was a combination of repertory's decline, the VCR's rise, and the real estate pressures that threaten to turn Washington into one large office-retail complex. For many years, the Circle was one of the few stations in an all-too-abbreviated trek through Hip Washington. The old theater doubled as a respectable cheap date and a bohemian hangout, reflecting the city's culture in ways that the locally irrelevant institutions of federal culture, such as the Kennedy Center, rarely touch. The Circle ran, necessarily, the films that the city wanted to see. But it also *taught* Washington about movies, forming a curious symbiosis with an audience it built while educating. The Circle's old schedule was immune to newspaper reviews; in its 1960s heyday, quite unknown films drew SRO audiences simply because they were Circle movies. This was a rare adventurousness in a city known for the stodginess of its business activities, and it paid off. The Circle's proprietors are now the city's leading exhibitors, having built a movie empire on the theater. It paid off for the city too. In the 1970s, Washington joined a handful of cities where cautious producers chose to open films that needed careful handling. The city's federalized culture will probably never play that role. Subsidized plays, exhibits, and so forth, operate at arm's length from Washington's natural, gradually expanding culture. While the hyped American National Theatre has flopped under the direction of the hyped Peter Sellars, the city's little Source Theater is moving out of its rat-infested quarters in the red-light district to far more ambitious quarters and Equity casts. After years of little-theater struggle, it is threatening to become another Arena Stage. Never mind that the worst thing you are supposed to be able to say about a city is that its experimental theater is "interesting."

IS WASHINGTON LOSING its dignity? For most of this century, the "dignified" design was just about all the style the capital could claim. This didn't mean that when it came time to build or rebuild itself, the city knew quite what it wanted, but it did generally recognize what it *didn't* want. It didn't want billboards on the sides of its buildings. It didn't want tall buildings to overshadow the purported majesty of the Capitol. It didn't want any local versions of Mann's Chinese—the so-called "atmospheric" style of movie house—or the garish neon display that went with it. Now that's all over with. Though nobody's building atmospheric theaters these days, the height limit is inching up and lighted advertising displays the size of buildings have appeared to little if any protest. Indeed, advertising is all over the sides of the city buses now, and one is greeted on entering the city with a red-and-black "Welcome" sign touting the mayor. Even the local license tags, which once allowed themselves only the phrase "Nation's Capital," now feature the pathetic pun "A Capital City" in slanting kitsch lettering. Washington's flirtation with flamboyance, even at this level, seems a mistake. The "dignity" approach may not have appealed to everybody, but it was a reasonably accurate reflection of the town's conservative character. This current lapse is likely to leave the city homogenized and without any character of its own.

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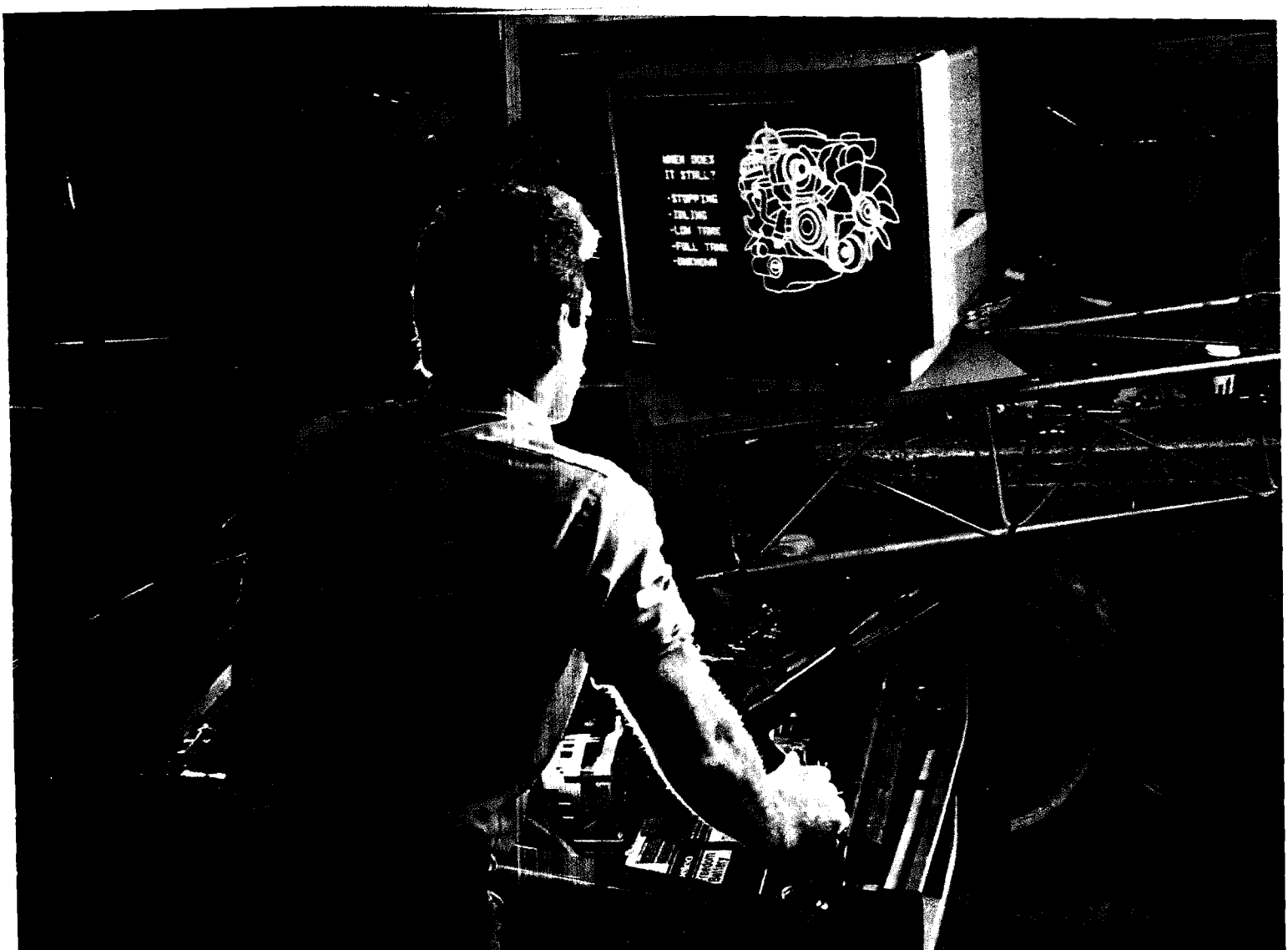

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